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VIDEO magazine

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10 AWESOME VCRs

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VIDEOTESTS
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What's more, the HS-CX7u

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The Arriflex Camera, like the 1950's 35-2C pictured here, was the first camera to use a "spinning mirror reflex shutter," making it possible for the camera operator to see through the camera while filming.

The "skier" icon represents the brightness event setting, one of six single-touch automatic settings, on the new Mitsubishi HS-CX7u Camcorder.

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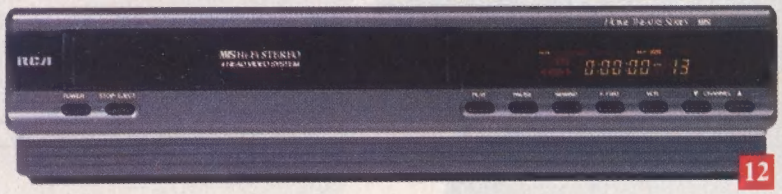

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Cover:
Fifteen years of inventive VCRs have fueled a video revolution that's changed the world. Pictured here is one of the latest—RCA's VR690HF with VCR Plus. Photograph by Vittorio Sartor

Video Magazine
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The Audit Bureau

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HOW TO BUY

Karaoke Players

You've already considered a new CD player. And you're reviewing the compact disc/laserdisc combi player option. Make sure to investigate yet another alternative — one that combines the best sights and sounds with singalong interactivity — the karaoke player.

Karaoke (which translates literally as "empty orchestra" from the Japanese) players play back special laserdiscs that carry music videos with lyrics printed along the bottom of the screen. With a supplied microphone, you become the vocalist in your own music video productions.

And there's more. In addition to this unique form of home entertainment, karaoke players are high quality combi players that supply standard compact disc and laserdisc entertainment. Three Pioneer LaserKaraoke models, the CLD-V720, CLD-V820, CLK-V920, also contain digital signal processing (DSP), adding three different sound fields (hall, stage and arena) to any audio/video environment. In fact, these are the only laserdisc players that contain DSP already built-in. There are an additional four DSP vocal effects — Pop, Jazz, Ballad, Chorus — that enhance any voice pattern with the most appropriate ambience: the Pop setting is used for more energetic vocals and emphasizes the high frequencies; the Jazz setting is for deliberate and unhurried vocals and it effects the low frequencies; Ballad is for soft gentle type vocals and it subdues echos and offers a short delay; and Chorus takes your voice and creates the effect of three people singing, adding 1/8th and 1/4th pitch to the original.

Otherwise, these versatile Pioneer LaserKaraoke machines offer the same type of high-end audio and video features you would expect from a dedicated combi unit. Both the CLD-V820 and CLD-K920 feature dual side play, and their CD player is fully programmable by remote control, There are currently about 1000 karaoke songs to choose from. The machines themselves range in price from $900 to $1900.

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CHANNEL ONE

The battle for your screen

For several years now there's been a real donnybrook waged behind the scenes to control how video gets delivered to your home. Lately, however, the backroom maneuverings have been spilling out into public view.

The battles are being waged on several fronts, including the halls of Congress, the lobbying circuit, the editorial and advertising pages of newspapers, and the network news. The objective of these contests remains fundamentally the same — to control the video input into America's homes.

At this writing, in the face of rising consumer unrest, Congress is scheduled to join again the debate about re-regulating cable. Many of you have expressed your own unhappiness with cable service in response to our January feature "The Trouble With Cable." (We'll run a selection of your letters in a forthcoming issue.) But the cable companies seem more interested in protecting their turf than in meeting the requests of their subscribers for high-quality video at reasonable prices.

Another side of this turf war is examined this month in "Dial V for Video." Recent court decisions and encouragement by the Federal Communications Commission of the so-called video dial tone (which would allow the regional phone companies to offer video services) have formed the latest skirmish lines — with cable operators, broadcasters and newspaper publishers arrayed against the "Baby Bells." That's right, broadcasters and cablecasters allied — strange bedfellows indeed.

There are other discordant notes in all this hoopla. For one, there's the breathless touting of some proposed services as supplying "video on demand" — as if the VCR hasn't been supplying this service to millions of us for 15 years now. And as if the laserdisc hasn't done so for more than a decade.

Then there's the spectacle of the cable industry whining that the phone companies represent monopolistic, unfair competition. What do cable operators know about competition — fair or otherwise? Not much, according to you, our readers. Your response to "The Trouble With Cable" indicates that the cable industry hasn't changed its spots. It continues to be almost unresponsive to basic customer complaints, even while it delivers diminished quality picture and sound at consistently rising prices.

We wouldn't dream of predicting who's going to come out on top in the many struggles to deliver video to your home. And we're not by nature advocates of government regulation. But we do know that the suppliers of home video products — hardware and programming — have for 15 years been most responsive players in an intensely competitive entertainment marketplace. That's something the cable operators cannot say.

Jim Barry

James M. Barry
Editor

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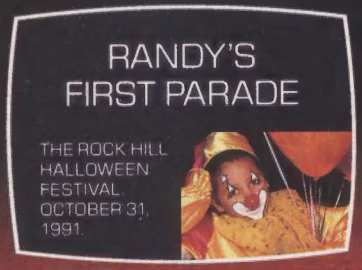

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FEEDBACK

Neck and Neck: Companies race for an HDTV standard.

Let the buyer decide

I've just finished reading "Hi-Def Divide" (Dec. '91). Your closing paragraph spells out the key issue that needs to be dealt with. The buying public should be allowed to decide what direction video will take. We're given the impression that there needs to be some sort of HDTV standard. Is this why we have Apple, IBM and Amiga computer systems? Is this why the public must decide between standard audio cassettes, DAT, DCC, vinyl, CD or MiniDisc?

The longer we wait to take action on some sort of system, the closer to obsolescence it will be when it hits the market. Nothing designed today can be a standard for the next 20 years. Too many technical advances will take place in that time. Give us a chance to make the decision.

Mark Fitzgerald
Memphis, Tennessee

Flawed favorite

I just bought *Video Magazine*'s "all-time favorite camcorder," a Sony TR81 ("Videotests," Oct. '91). This is my third camcorder and I readily agree with you. I have only one complaint. It offers a 1/10,000-second shutter speed for viewing fast action; however, in pause mode the picture flashes, jumps and has a large noise bar at the bottom. When I asked Sony about the inconsistency, they said the TR81 doesn't offer "crystal clear" pause as do other Sony models. The intent was that the tape should be viewed on a Hi8 deck or dubbed to S-VHS. This should have been noted as an absent feature in your "Videotest" box. Still, I would not trade the TR81 for a bigger model with this feature.

Robert Taylor
Dunwoody, Georgia

Computer editing

I read with great interest your article concerning video on IBM clones ("Big Blue Meets the VCR," Oct. '91). I applaud your exposition of the subject. It is rather like putting wings on an elephant—it can be done, but why not just go with an eagle? You had to cannibalize three of your office machines to rig one video machine for IBM. Why not leave the clones to their spreadsheets and dedicate an Amiga to video. After all, video has been the Amiga's entry to the mainstream. Have one for video and then learn how versatile it is and what a beautiful operating system it has.

Jeff Johnson
Cincinnati, Ohio

Brent Butterworth replies: Make no mistake: We love the Amiga and use one for most of our video editing. But it's not the only viable option. A capable, Amiga 2000-based system costs $2,500 or more. Anyone who owns an IBM 286, 386 or 486 can save hundreds of dollars by opting for Truevision's $1,800 Targa +16 video board, and get chroma keying and superior graphics in the process.

California format faceoff

We had a small earthquake here recently in Southern California. I had left home with a Beta tape standing on the Beta machine, and a VHS tape on the VHS machine. When I returned home the Beta tape was standing alone, thereby demonstrating the superiority of the format.

Gary Miller
Temple City, California

Video Magazine welcomes your comments. Please include a phone number, but not a return envelope as the volume of mail does not permit replies. Address correspondence to Feedback, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

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EDITED BY BRENT BUTTERWORTH

LATE NEWS

Impressions, insights and inside info from CES

Gerry Calabrese of Philips Consumer Electronics is hot on the prospects for CD-I. "It will be the next VCR," he said at the recent Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, "the next family gift." • But will CD-I replace laserdisc? Maybe, said Calabrese: "CD-I will be ready to carry movies later this year. It will be up to the studios to make it happen." No, said David Wallace of Pioneer Laserdisc Corporation of America: "The quality [of CD-I full-motion video] just will not be there—and filmmakers won't be interested in putting out their work on a new, lower-quality medium." • RCA's demonstration of a widescreen 16:9 TV set side by side with a conventional 4:3 set proved there's a striking difference. Especially exciting were feature film footage and simulations of widescreen sports broadcasts pairing a 4:3 picture with statistics and out-of-town scores on the unused portion of the screen. Watch for the new sets later this year. • How serious is Apple Computer Chairman and CEO John Sculley about making his company a major player in consumer electronics? Pretty serious, we'd say. When asked whether we can expect to see a billion-dollar Apple Consumer Electronics subsidiary at CES a decade from now, Sculley responded, "I would hope so." In his keynote address, Sculley said Apple "hopes to become one of the great innovators and agents of growth in consumer information products in the 1990s." • Much of the talk at the show centered on Philips' Digital Compact Cassette (DCC), which was demonstrated by Denon, Onkyo, Marantz and others. Sony's competing Mini-Disc (MD) format was nowhere to be found: The company chose not to exhibit. • The show's most offbeat offering was the $15,000 RestRider, described by creators David Seefelt and Bob Goodman as a "brain gym" for mental fitness. The stressed-out videophile lies on a "space couch" (actually a gel-filled mattress) suspended above a powerful subwoofer. A canopy rolls over the user's head. Inside, a color monitor, a hi-fi VCR, a CD player and concealed speakers feed the restless rider relaxing sights and sounds. • Are today's video products a good value? You bet! As Marty Holleran, president of Thomson Consumer Electronics' American Division, pointed out, in 1984, a full-featured 25-inch color TV set cost about $900. Today, a 25-inch model with many more features lists for just $600—a decline of 30 percent for a vastly improved product. • We were shocked to hear one of the show's best surround-sound demos at RCA's display in Las Vegas' Palladium club. The company's new home theater speaker system uses a unique single rear speaker that produced dramatic surround effects. • For the first time in its quarter-century history, CES will be open to the public this summer. Gary Shapiro of the Electronics Industries Association is predicting that as many as 100,000 enthusiasts will trek to Chicago's McCormick Place on Memorial Day weekend to view the wares of more than 1,000 exhibitors. Admission will cost $10. For information and a free brochure, call 800-388-6901. If you go, wear comfortable shoes. ■

Show Scene: Sanyo/Fisher's CES booth showcased new HDTV technology.

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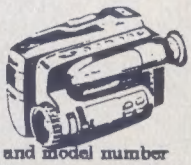

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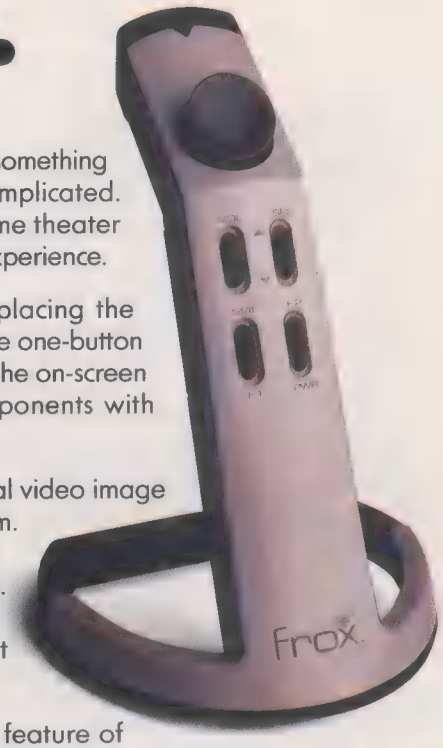

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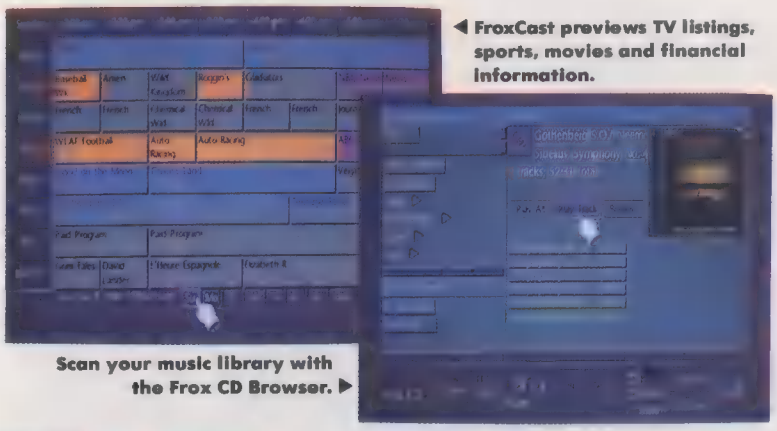

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GAZETTE

Terry Gilliam rebounds with 'The Fisher King'

Director and ex-Monty Python member Terry Gilliam had to put his career on the line for his latest feature film, *The Fisher King* (Columbia TriStar Home Video). He directed the financially successful *Time Bandits* and the critically acclaimed *Brazil*, but 1988's *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* had failed on both counts. To make matters worse, Gilliam had acquired a reputation in Hollywood for financial excesses and delays.

To get *The Fisher King* made, Gilliam had to agree to finish on time and on budget, *and* to forfeit any overages from his own salary. But he knew he had to do this project as soon as he read the script. "I felt that [scriptwriter Richard LaGravenese] had gotten into my head and stolen my thoughts," Gilliam says.

Even so, it proved difficult to convince TriStar, the studio that bore *Munchausen*'s financial burden, to make *The Fisher King*, an offbeat tale of a down-and-out disc jockey (Jeff Bridges) who befriends a homeless ex-history professor (Robin Williams). But the presence of mega-star Williams changed everything. Says *The Fisher King*'s co-producer Lynn Obst: "Never underestimate the power of a star."

Man at Work: Director Terry Gilliam on the set of 1985's elaborate vision of the future, *Brazil*.

With all the pieces in place, Gilliam set out to make a film more modest in scope than any of his previous efforts. "I think my reputation is one of making big special-effects films where the characters are secondary to the world in which they exist," he says. "*The Fisher King* is just the opposite of that. I wanted to show that I can actually work with a small number of people and create a good film." The risk paid off for both Gilliam and Tri-Star: *The Fisher King* scored very respectable numbers at the box office while earning widespread critical acclaim. And its character-driven story translates far better to video than, say, *Brazil*, which begs for a wide screen with its awe-inspiring production design. Those seeking even more should snap up Criterion's laserdisc edition of the *The Fisher King*, which features additional footage, commentary from Gilliam and a full letterboxed image.

—Jon Silberg

In Search Of: *The Fisher King*'s Robin Williams as a homeless man tormented by hallucinations and a thirst for the Holy Grail.

Dario Argento's touch of 'Evil'

"Video is my obsession," says Dario Argento, the maestro of the Italian horror film. "I have a shop in Rome called Profondo Rosso ("Deep Red") that I run with [director] Luigi Cozzi. It's more like a club where we sell cassettes, books and U.S. fanzines. We run it not to make money but to have a place to meet with young people, our fans."

Video may also turn out to be Argento's salvation. Known as the Italian Hitchcock, Argento makes stylish, vivid horror thrillers that are routinely censored in Europe and drastically cut—often by as much as 20 percent of their original running times—for U.S. release. But Argento's persistence in demanding that his films be seen as he intended is starting to pay off. The uncut, letterboxed video release of his 1977 classic *Suspiria* was a hit, leading to a similar release for his 1988 *Terror at the Opera*.

This month brings the video release of *Two Evil Eyes* (FoxVideo), Argento's production of two Edgar Allen Poe stories. The first, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," was written and directed by George Romero, a friend since 1978 when Argento produced and scored his epochal *Dawn of the Dead*.

Argento directed *Two Evil Eyes*' second segment, "The Black Cat," which stars Harvey Keitel as a sleazy crime photographer whose obsessions get the better of him. Though both segments were filmed in Romero's home town of Pittsburgh, Argento says there was no actual collaboration between the two

The Greatest: Jessica Harper in Dario Argento's stylish U.S. breakthrough film on video, *Suspiria*.

during filming. "For directors, it's not natural," he explains.

Although Argento has worked exclusively in the "giallo" genre since his first film in 1970, he doesn't feel that it has been played out. He notes that as he was filming *Two Evil Eyes*, the U.S. box office was led by three horror/fantasies—*Ghost*, *Darkman* and *Flatliners*. While he found *Flatliners* "a terrible pic-

The Latest: Argento's "The Black Cat" joins George Romero's Edgar Allen Poe tale in *Two Evil Eyes*.

ture, totally boring," Argento praises *Ghost* for its sincerity. "I don't like that cynical attitude that horror movies are jokes. *Ghost* is not a joke: It takes itself seriously and it's a good picture."

Far from finding the genre restrictive, Argento happily plans to work in it for the remainder of his career. "In the life of a director, you can't hope to make more than 20 pictures. And in 20 pictures, it's impossible to show all your fantasies. You need 100 pictures."

—M. Faust

Video Bookshelf

From *Beauty and the Beast*'s Belle to *Gone With the Wind*'s Belle Watling, from British director Carol Reed to *Baby Doll* Carroll Baker, four recent bookstore arrivals pack 1,579 pages with goodies for the serious film fan—*and* for the viewer who vaguely remembers a girl named Scarlett O'Hara.

Disney's Art of Animation: From Mickey Mouse to Beauty and the Beast. One of the most collectible is Bob Thomas' gorgeous hardcover (Hyperion, $39.95). Crammed with sketches, photos, storyboards, posters and film stills, the book is divided into two parts: The first follows the early years film by film and—perhaps most interesting—makes the animators as real to us as their creations. The second is a "making of" chronicle of the studio's latest "instant classic," *Beauty and the Beast*. And even though the emphasis is visual, the text isn't fluff: Thomas, a Hollywood AP correspondent, provides easily understood technical explanations (What is a multiplane camera, anyway?) and fascinating anecdotes (like the beginnings of an innovative animator named Tim Burton)—and he isn't afraid to call a flop a flop.

Gone With the Wind

The Art of Gone With the Wind: The Making of a Legend. Judy Cameron and Paul J. Christman's work (Prentice Hall Press, $16) notes the painstaking eye for detail and perfection that helped make the film such a phenomenon. David O. Selznick's zeal for accuracy in sets, costumes and makeup led to thorns for buttons in Army uniforms, pantaloons and petticoats for the ladies, 500 authentic rifles and even 27 versions of one dress that had to travel from Atlanta to Tara and survive the hardships of working the land. Rich in photos—most on the set, some rare outtakes—this is a must-have for buffs. With glimpses of Margaret Mitchell and preproduction controversies as well as the Atlanta premiere and Oscar night, it covers those events of the late '30s as wonderfully as the film itself has spanned the decades.

Cult Movie Stars. Somewhat lesser icons—icy Hitchcock blonde Tippi Hedren, Tarzan Johnny Weissmuller, porn star Marilyn Chambers, horror-film staple Vincent Price, John Waters' favorite transvestite Divine and 745 others—appear in this offbeat, entertaining guide (Simon & Schuster, $17). Danny Peary, the author of three volumes of *Cult Movies*, lists key films and affectionately tells why they merit our "guilty pleasure" in viewing—but only provides 275 black-and-white photos, which unfortunately leaves people like "fixture of B science-fiction films in the '50s" Morris Ankrum and "ideal movie landlady" Kathleen Freeman floating somewhere in our late-night TV subconscious.

Tippi Hedren

Metropolis

Foreign Affairs. This collection of reviews (Mercury House, $14.95) of foreign films on video from critics such as Pauline Kael, Richard Schickel, Judith Crist and Roger Ebert opens up a world little known to many. Thoughtful and well-rounded, the reference looks at the First Wave (1920-45) country by country, then segues into new "waves" of filmmaking. Without becoming pretentious, it brings new insight into familiar titles like *The Seven Samurai*, *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Metropolis*—and makes more obscure pieces like Agnes Varda's *Vagabond* and Jean Vigo's *Zero de Conduite* a little more familiar and enticing.

—April P. Bernard

VIDEOTESTS

Name Change: The Model 100 is one of the first VCRs marketed under the Memorex brand, which will now be used for all Radio Shack video components.

VIDEOTEST 625

MEMOREX *VHS VCR*

Radio Shack, the country's largest electronics chain, now markets all its video products under another well-known name, Memorex. The hi-fi, four-head Memorex Model 100 occupies the top of the 1992 VCR lineup. Its midmount design is intended to reduce vibration, video noise and picture jitter.

The number of controls on the VCR has been kept to a minimum, so programming and many other functions are possible only from the remote. To eliminate buttons, one pair on the VCR controls channel selection, manual tracking, vertical lock, cursor control and time set. The Model 100's features include auto play/rewind/eject, a fast response transport, mode lock, index search, one-touch record with delay and a real-time counter with memory.

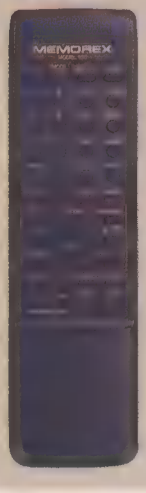
It also has a cable-ready, phase-locked loop (PLL) tuner with MTS/SAP decoding, auto tuner programming and add/erase. There is an audio level display, but there are no record level controls. It offers several playback options, including double-speed playback without sound, variable-speed slow motion, frame advance and segment repeat.

The cassette hatch is centered on the upper front panel. A black plastic window sits below the hatch. At left are buttons for power and eject. The right end of the panel swings down to reveal

HIGHLIGHTS

Memorex, best known as an audio tape brand, is the new name for all Radio Shack video products. The first top-of-the-line VCR to carry the Memorex name is the Model 100, a four-head, hi-fi machine with a midmount transport. It has several unusual features, including a blue screen on/off switch, a mode lock that deactivates most of the buttons on the remote control, and automatic eject after rewind. Picture quality and ease of use are both good and audio quality is very good, so overall performance is good. At $500, it is competitive with other VCRs in its price class. The Model 100 is readily available at thousands of Radio Shack stores, but competing VCRs may be more deeply discounted.

Memorex Model 100 VHS VCR



Price: $500

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 10.4 lbs; 3-1/2 x 15 x 12-3/4 inches

Tape Format & Speeds: VHS; SP, LP, EP

Video Heads: 4

Cue & Review Search: 5x SP & LP; 15x EP

Fast Forward/Rewind Time: 4 min. for T-120

Front-Panel Controls: power, eject, TV/VCR, rewind/search, play, fast forward/search, record/one-touch record (OTR), TV mode, auto channel program, add/erase, multifunction - and +, output select, SAP on/off and blue screen on/off

Remote Control: IR wireless with buttons for power, mode lock, eject, TV/VCR, program, check, onscreen, 10-digit keypad, 100, channel up and down, SP/LP/EP, display, cancel (counter reset), one-touch record (OTR) start time, OTR/record, stop, play, pause/still, frame advance, rewind/search, fast forward/search, zero back, repeat, SAP on/off, output select, 2x, slow, slow speed down/reverse DPSS index search and slow speed up/forward DPSS index search

Counter Digits: 5—hrs:mins:secs.

Program Start

Locator/Index/Cue: auto mark index; forward/reverse index search up to 9 marks

Audio: linear mono, hi-fi AFM stereo

Tuning Method: digital—PLL, MTS/SAP

Channel Selectors: programmable scan on VCR, scan plus direct access on remote

Preset Method: auto program with add/erase

Cable Tuning Range: 111 channels—4A/A8, A to W, W+1 to W+58, A-3 to A-1, W+59 to W+84

Timer: 8-event/1-year

Special Features: still frame, frame advance, slow motion, speed play, auto play/rewind/eject, auto tracking, mode lock

Absent Features: flying erase head, audio dub, video dub, insert edit, remote pause, titles/graphics, jog/shuttle dial

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: 240 lines

S/N Ratios (dB): video unweighted—SP 42.1, LP 39.3, EP 39.2; video weighted—SP 50.8, LP 48.3, EP 47.8; chroma AM—SP 44.2, LP 42.7, EP 40.4; chroma PM—SP 40.7, LP 34.4, EP 36

Audio Frequency Response: hi-fi—20 Hz-20 kHz, +0.1/-1.8 dB, all speeds; linear (-3 dB)—SP 75 Hz-10 kHz, to 5 kHz LP, to 4 kHz EP

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range: 81.3 dB

Linear Audio S/N: 41.1 dB

Audio Distortion: hi-fi—0.3%; linear—1.1%

RATINGS

Picture: good

Audio: very good

Ease of Use: good

Overall: good

transport controls, like play and stop. In the second row are a switch for blue screen on/off and channel programming. There are also multipurpose minus and plus buttons and two more for output select and SAP on/off.

The rear panel has F-connectors for RF input and output, a channel 3/4 RF output selecter, and RCA jacks for video/stereo audio input and output. The remote control is long and slim, with buttons divided into functional groups by background color, outline and even a line joining buttons with related functions. It has transport controls, like play, fast forward, 2x speed play, zero back (return), slow motion, stop and eject; tuner control buttons, including a 10-digit keypad, channel selecters and SAP; onscreen programming and one-touch recording (OTR) controls; buttons that double as slow-motion speed controls and index search forward and reverse; and a recording speed control.

With so few connectors, hookup is easy, but without front-panel inputs and a remote pause or synchro edit jack, dubbing from a camcorder can be a bit tedious. You may miss having pause/still, record speed, clock/counter and counter reset controls on the deck, yet the remote control has a full complement of transport controls and more.

Of the unusual controls on the remote, none may be more useful than mode lock, which disables all controls except record pause and auto pause/still release, if it is in that mode for more than five minutes. Other unusual and useful controls on the remote include repeat, 2x, zero back and eject. Like most modern VCRs, it turns on automatically if you insert a cassette, goes into play mode if the cassette tab is missing and rewinds at the end of the cassette. It also ejects at the end of rewind, which is unusual. Ease of use is good—the Model 100 is well-suited to watching prerecorded movies and taping or time-shifting television broadcasts.

Picture quality is good, and audio quality is very good, ratings that are comparable to those of many other mid-priced VHS hi-fi machines. Our overall rating is good. It's a good buy for those who know and trust Radio Shack, and who prefer doing business with a large, stable retailer. ■

VIDEOTEST 626

MINOLTA *VHS camcorder*

Even the Japanese manufacturers are confused by U.S. camcorder enthusiasts, who continue to buy full-sized VHS camcorders when much smaller models are available. (In most other countries, compacts and subcompacts completely dominate the market.) One reason for the continued popularity of VHS camcorders is that their tapes can be played in any VHS VCR without an adapter. The design of these machines also allows the user to prop the camcorder on his or her shoulder for steadier shots, and makes room for large, dedicated controls for each function.

Minolta was the first brand to offer camcorders in VHS, VHS-C and 8mm, and continues to market all three. The Master Series V-228 is the top of its full-sized VHS line. It offers an 8x optical zoom with an 8x digital extender, for an effective range of 64x. When the digital zoom is employed, an onscreen readout informs the user of the magnification.

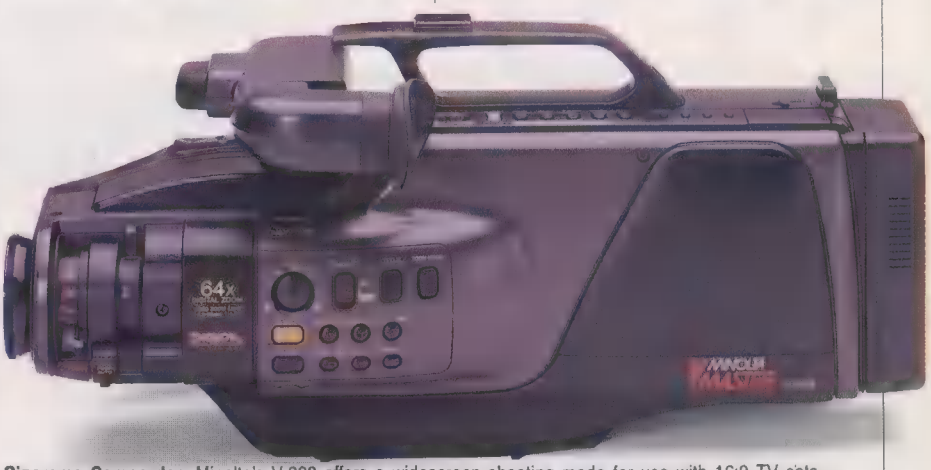
Other attractive features include an auto exposure system that selects the fastest shutter speed possible (up to 1/250-second) for a given lighting situation. This removes much of the blur from slow-motion and still playback of action shots, without requiring the user to select a high shutter speed. It also offers manual selection of shutter speeds to 1/10,000-second, a rotary continuous manual iris control, mechanical manual zoom and focus rings for precise control, an accessory shoe that powers an optional zoom video light without cords, interval/self timer, negative/positive recording, and two pages of one-line, 16-character titles.

Index marking is automatic only under certain circumstances, but you can add marks manually. On playback, the V-228 reads one mark at a time on command, making it easy to find sections of a tape. It performs camera search (for scanning a tape while in record pause mode), instant review (which plays back the last few seconds of a recorded scene) and blank tape search (which finds the first blank section).

The V-228 also has plenty of editing features. The most unusual is microphone mixing during playback, which allows the user to add narration when copying or editing. Video dub, audio dub

continued on page 90

HIGHLIGHTS Full-size VHS camcorders remain popular in the U.S., largely because of convenience—their tapes play in any VHS VCR without an adapter. The Minolta Master Series V-228 is a long, squat model distinguished by advanced features, including digital zoom to 64x, a wide shooting mode intended for use with future widescreen TV sets, auto head cleaning and continuous manual iris adjustment. Picture quality is excellent for VHS; its linear mono audio and ease of use are both very good. Overall performance is very good to excellent. Its $1,300 price is comparable with that of other VHS camcorders.



Cinerama Camcorder: Minolta's V-228 offers a widescreen shooting mode for use with 16:9 TV sets.

VIDEOTEST PHOTOGRAPHS: LES MORSILLO

VIDEOTEST 627

SONY *video projector*

Sony has always been a major supplier of front video projectors for professional and industrial applications, such as airplanes, museums and clubs. In response to a resurgence of consumer interest in front projection for home theaters, the company has introduced its first projector designed for consumer use, the VPH-1000Q. It is a modified version of a professional model, the VPH-1024Q.

The 1024Q has high-resolution, aspherical, color-corrected lenses and an RGB input, which the 1000Q lacks. However, both have S-video and video inputs, and both accept NTSC, PAL, SECAM and NTSC 4.43 sources. A 220-volt model, the VPH-1000QM, is also available.

The VPH-1000Q uses 5.5-inch, high-brightness tubes, tinted liquid coolant filters and three f/1 hybrid lenses to produce pictures from 70 to 250 inches on curved or flat screens. It can be used with flat or curved screens, and can even be used for rear projection on suitable 70-inch screens.

The lens system uses Sony's dual focus arrangement, which includes a group of glass elements for excellent light transmission and center screen focus, and an aspheric acrylic group for excellent corner focus. Each group is focused separately for optimum image quality. The elements are multicoated to virtually eliminate internal reflections that reduce picture contrast and resolution. A variety of optional accessories lets the user create many custom configurations.

The rear edge of the projector opens to reveal a compartment with convergence controls for red and blue horizontal and vertical centering. As usual, there are no adjustments for the green beam. To their right is the normal/test switch, a rotary vertical hold control and a volume control. Rotary picture controls and a power switch sit in the

Consumer Contender: Sony's VPH-1000Q front projector (rear panel below) and optional remote controller.

HIGHLIGHTS Home theater is taking off, and Sony is getting in on the big-screen action with the VPH-1000Q, its first consumer-model video projector. It is set for a 100-inch diagonal image, but can be modified to produce images from 72 to 250 inches, or as a 70-inch rear projector. Special tubes and optics produce an excellent picture. Ease of use and overall performance for this $6,000 projector are very good to excellent. Its only fault is that it has no wireless remote control: For the picture, we'll forgive.

Sony VPH-1000Q Video Projector

Price: $6,000

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 66.2 lbs.; 11-3/8 x 21 x 23-5/8 inches

Screen Size: 70-250 inches (not supplied)

Speaker Size: one, 2 x 3-1/2 inches

Remote Control: wired (optional)

Inputs: S-video, video, mono audio

Outputs: monitor video

Internal Audio Amplifier Power: 3 watts

Absent Features: wireless remote control, tuner, multiple inputs

Accessories: supplied—power cord, spacers for 200-inch operation; optional—VPR-722S remote controller ($700), CCQ BRS cables for remote control (price n.a.), ST-72TV stereo tuner ($460), SB-VB A/V switcher ($110), SB-V700 advanced A/V switcher ($420), PSS-722 projector suspension support ($630), PSS-10 support extension ($320), SU-722 projector pedestal ($610), VLC-1040 carrying case ($830). Front screens—VPS-100F1 100-inch flat ($880), VPS-120 120-inch flat (price n.a.), VPS-72HG 72-inch curved (price n.a.), VPS-100HG 100-inch curved (price n.a.). Rear screen—VPS-700R 70-inch flat ($4,285)

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: 650 lines

Picture S/N (dB): video—59.7, chroma AM—66.2, chroma PM—65

Color Temperature: 6,550 Kelvins

Accuracy of Colors: excellent

Audio Frequency Response: mono speaker—100 Hz-12.5 kHz

Audio S/N: 55 dB

Total Harmonic Distortion: less than 2%

RATINGS

Picture: excellent

Audio: average

Ease of Use: very good/excellent

Overall: very good/excellent

right side of the compartment. There are also a volume control and an auto/SECAM color system switch.

At the front are a small speaker, the power connector and main switch, and connectors for the cable for an optional remote controller, S-video/video/mono audio input and monitor video output. If the cable for the remote is connected, it disables the projector's power, picture and volume controls. The bottom panel has adjustable leveling feet and a pair of brackets for attaching a ceiling-mount suspension support.

The projector may be used on a table or a desk (the recommended height is 26-7/8 inches), on an optional pedestal or in a ceiling mount. If you choose the ceiling mount, we strongly recommend professional installation—you don't want a 66-pound projector falling.

The VPH-1000Q is set to project a 100-inch image on a flat screen from a table, a desk or a pedestal. Adjustments for other options must be made inside the projector. Any adjustment inside the projector should be made only by a qualified technician.

After installation, the projector should require little attention. The user adjusts the picture as with any other color or monitor, and corrects convergence if color fringing (caused by the red, green and blue images drifting apart) appears.

The projector may be used as supplied, but a wide range of accessories makes it more convenient and pleasurable to use. The most useful is the remote controller, especially if the projector is ceiling-mounted. The controller duplicates the projector's controls and S-video/video/mono audio input. It requires a special cable, which is available in various lengths. We wish Sony offered a wireless remote option.

The projector and remote each have only one set of inputs. The optional SB-VB audio/video switcher extends this to four. The SB-V700 switcher offers advanced switching and dubbing. The optional tuner is the ST-72TV, the same one available as part of the XBR Pro System ("Videotests," Mar. '88). A wide variety of screens make it easy to design an entire system from one source. The ceiling mount is a must if you want to use it this way. Ease of use is very good to excellent.

Color accuracy and picture quality are both excellent. Light output of the projector is 600 lumens, but image brightness depends on screen size, curvature and surface. The internal speaker is there as a convenience. Its audio quality is only average, and it is not intended to be the normal sound system used with the projector. The projector has a cooling fan that makes enough noise to interfere with the sound from the internal speaker. With a typical home theater audio system, the fan would not be heard except at the quietest parts of the material. Our overall rating is very good to excellent. The VPH-1000Q earns our enthusiastic recommendation. ■

TECH TIP

VCR Plus pointer

When programming Gemstar's VCR Plus to record more than one event in a row on the same channel, punch in the first number, then use the "add time" button to increase the recording time. This only works for one-time recording. It saves time and you don't have to look for the second number.

Ray Lacroix
Salinas, California

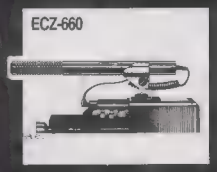
MAKING A GREAT VIDEO INCLUDES QUALITY SOUND TOO!

After you used your camcorder the first time, you realized that your camcorder's built-in microphone picks up sounds from all directions, including those you don't want. And, when shooting from a distance, you can't hear your subject's voice clearly. Azden, the leader in quality audio for video, manufactures a full line of microphones to make your sound as good as your pictures. Each one fills a particular need.

WMS-PRO

This powerful professional miniature VHF wireless system has a range of over 300 feet. It allows you to shoot from a distance and pick up your subject's voice clearly. It has 2 switchable frequencies, and it comes with 2 mics (handheld and clip-on). The transmitter clips to the subjects belt, and the mini transmitter can attach to the camera (shoe mount & velcro included) or be kept in your breast pocket.

ECZ-660



Full-size directional mic. Allows you to zoom in on subject's voice, reducing side noises. Range 35-40 feet

HS-7V

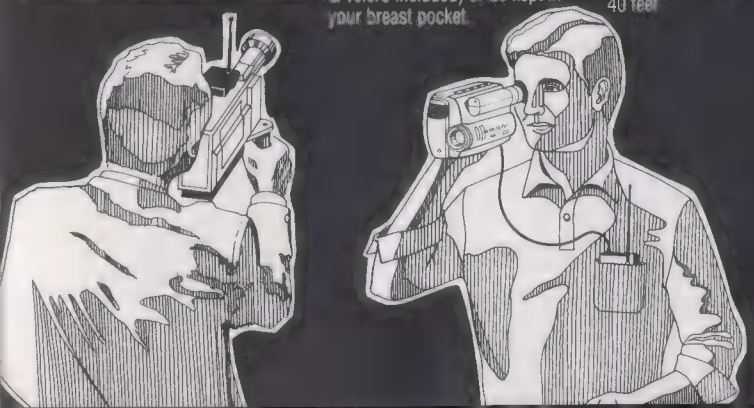
Headset with boom mic for adding narration as you shoot. Your voice becomes the dominant sound recorded. Or, use it to monitor sound you're recording.

ECZ-770

Mini directional mic for palm-sized camcorders. Slide switch for adjusting width of sound pick-up pattern. Low cut filter.

WMS-100

1 mic (clip-on) mini wireless system in 49MHz band. 125 ft. range 2 frequencies — choose the cleanest sound. Same size and features as WMS-PRO, but not as powerful. **Also available with 2 mics as WMS-200.**



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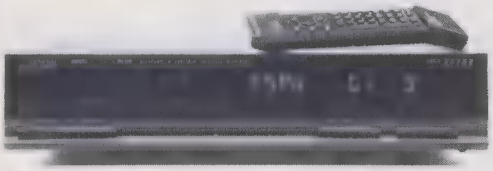
When was the last time you saw pictures this remarkable from outer space?



If you really want to experience out-of-this-world entertainment, we suggest you launch a complete exploration of satellite television. With the VideoCipher® II Plus Super 2770R Integrated Receiver Descrambler (IRD) from General Instrument.

What you'll find is that the Super 2770R gives you 150 channels of satellite entertainment from around the world. With digital stereo sound. A laser video disc quality picture* so crisp and clear, the tuner is patented. And on-screen menu prompts to help you navigate through programming, so you'll never get lost in space. Plus, you get over 6,000 additional program choices a month with the built-in VIDEOpal® instant pay-per-view system.

Be the first on your block in outer space with the Super 2770R IRD. And discover a whole new frontier in entertainment.

GENERAL INSTRUMENT

General Instrument, P.O. Box 700, Hickory, NC 28603, (704) 327-4700. © 1991 Cable/Home Communication Corp.
VideoCipher® and VIDEOpal® are registered trademarks of General Instrument Corporation. *Subject to system configuration.

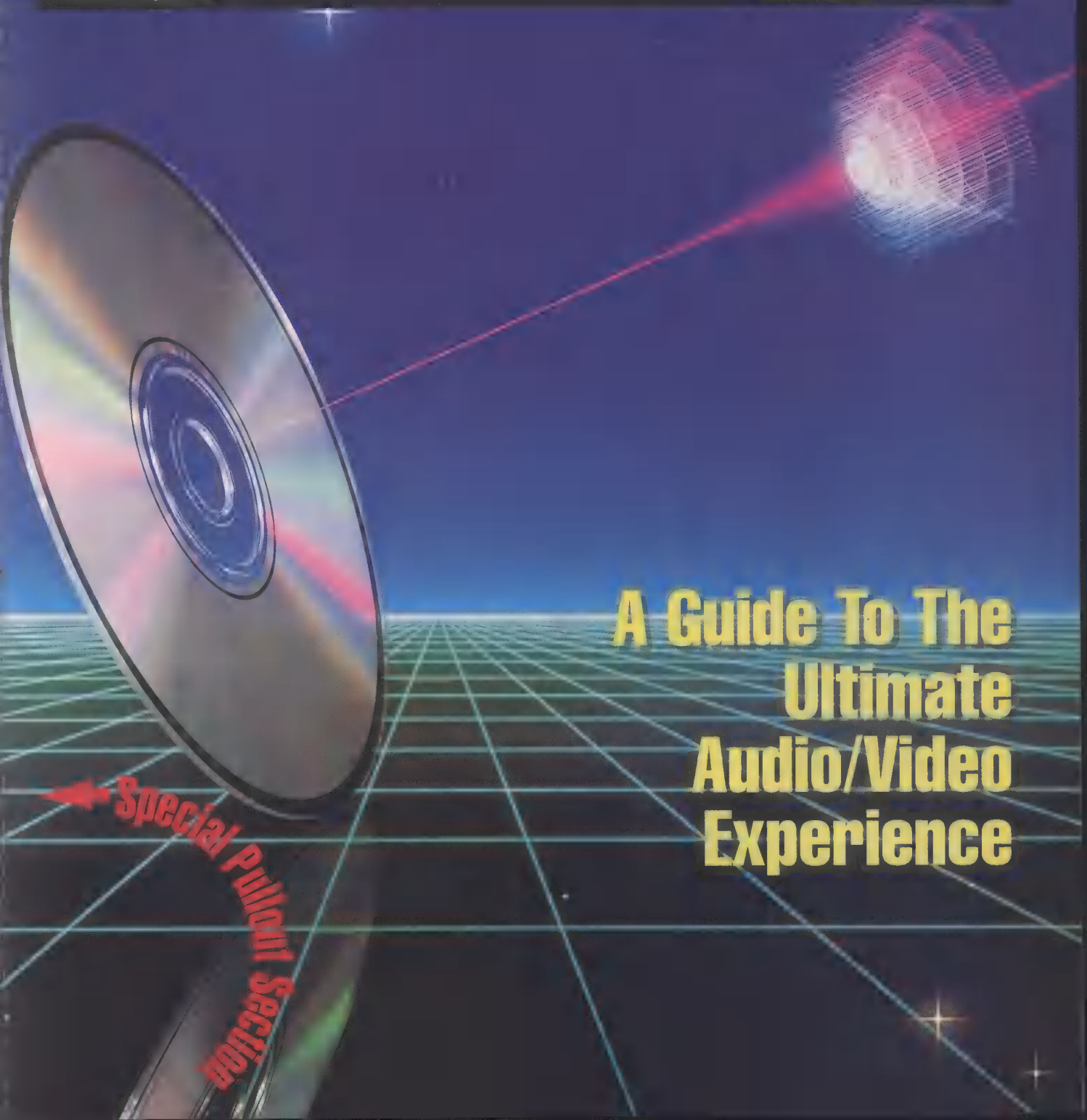
Circle 9 on Reader Service Card.

SATELLITE

HOME THEATRE

VIDEO Magazine

Advertising Supplement



A Guide To The Ultimate Audio/Video Experience

Special Pullout Section

General: The Leader in Satellite Television

Satellite pioneer General Instrument offers consumers a new way of looking at television.

General Instrument's premier technological expertise is behind the VideoCipher II Plus Super 2770R Integrated Receiver Descrambler.

Television viewers have more options today then ever before. And they can control these options without having to leave their chairs. Thanks to recent technical innovations, satellite TV is at the center of the home theater experience, allowing program options to grow exponentially. At present, more than 100 free channels, over 80 subscription channels and 28 instant pay-per-view channels are available. Instant pay-per-view offers over 10,000 extra viewing choices every month.

General Instrument expects the future of the home entertainment industry to be dominated by satellite television systems and is the leading manufacturer of satellite television equipment and descrambling systems.

Using a General Instrument Integrated Receiver Descrambler (IRD) at the center of your system combines a laser video disc-quality picture (subject to system configuration) for large screen TV with digital surround sound or Dolby® Pro-Logic decoding.

General Instrument sets the standard for satellite video and audio innovation. The company pioneered the technology that enables viewing of movies, sports and other entertainment options via satellite.

And General Instrument products have advanced the technological excellence of satellite TV. For example, the company's premier technological expertise is behind the VideoCipher®II Plus Super 2770R Integrated Receiver Descrambler. The system features General Instrument's patented tuning, a one-year/six-event VCR timer, built-in AnyWhere® UHF remote, digital stereo sound that is comparable to CD quality, helpful on-screen displays and a 150 favorite channel recall. What's more, General Instrument products come with an unprecedented five-year limited parts and labor warranty.

Pay-per-view has never been easier. General Instrument's VIDEOpal® order recorder is built into the Super 2770R, providing instant ordering at the touch of a button, so you only pay for the programs that you order. Programming services available through VIDEOpal include Satellite Sports Network, Viewer's Choice, the Cable Video Store, Spice, Playboy at Night, TVN and Turner Premier, just to name a few.

General Instrument is currently running a promotion, through August 9, 1992, that brings the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games right into your family room — in their entirety. With the purchase of the Super 2770R, 2700R or 2720R IRD, all of which have a built-in VIDEOpal order recorder, you will receive the NBC Satellite Olympics TripleCast Silver-Package absolutely free. Valued at $125, this package gives you a whole new way to view the Olympics with three full-time channels for two solid weeks.

What's next? General Instrument's DigiCipher™ will change the world of satellite television. An advanced digital video compression technology, DigiCipher will revolutionize television with increased program capacity and improved picture quality. DigiCipher is capable of transmitting up to 10 standard TV signals over a single satellite transponder to existing home satellite dishes. Programmers can increase the number of program channels with a "seamless" simulcast interface between satellite and cable or broadcast systems, allowing for future home HDTV delivery and reception, as well as satellite data transmission.

General Instrument is also a pioneer in the high definition television arena. Through DigiCipher and the company's joint efforts with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, General Instrument has helped American industry compete for the North American standard for

VideoCipher II Plus 2770R Integrated Receiver Descrambler

HDTV. General Instrument submitted HDTV systems to the Federal Communications Commission for testing beginning in November, 1991.

With all these technological advancements changing the world of home entertainment, now is a better time than ever to enter this exciting arena.

Ask your local satellite retailer for details on General Instrument products and the free Olympics Triple-Cast Silver Package today, or call General Instrument at (704) 327-4700 for more details.

Above, Chaparral's Monterey Model 90.

Chaparral Continues Pioneering Tradition

User-friendliness and quality construction characterize satellite TV products.

There probably wouldn't be a satellite television business if it hadn't been for Chaparral. Company co-founders H. Taylor Howard and Robert Taggart created the first home satellite system, improved existing feedhorn technology and began marketing their products to consumers in the late 1970s.

Today, Chaparral continues to pioneer new satellite designs for home, business and educational use worldwide. Its Monterey satellite receivers offer such premium home theater features as picture-in-picture, Dolby surround sound, MTS stereo and audio/video enhancement circuitry, offering consumers the best possible audio and video performance from their satellite signals. On-screen menus and prompts make the units easy to use, and their integrated VideoCipher descramblers offer uninterrupted access to hundreds of premium satellite programs. As the first satellite manufacturer member of the Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association (CEDIA), Chaparral is establishing satellite technology as the center of today's home theater trend.

The Monterey Model 90 satellite receiver exemplifies how this works, complementing VCRs and laserdisc players with video performance that is superior to standard broadcast or cable TV. With its picture-in-picture feature, you can watch two program sources at once. With its Dolby surround sound decoder you can receive satellite sounds the way they were intended for theatrical release. A unique four-way switcher offers quick selection between audio/video sources. And its digital stereo sound capability allows you to download sonic signals from the skies that sound as good as a compact disc. Otherwise, the unit offers parental lock-outs, programmable event timer, favorite channel menu, and C/Ku band compatibility.

Made-in-America satellite TV products are the preferred brands worldwide. This is why Chaparral is proud of the fact that every one of its feedhorn products is 100 percent American-made. Its Polarotor feedhorns offer a wide range of features, including adjustable or fixed scalar rings, Golden Rings for deep dish installations, 100 percent stainless steel hardware, and servo motors designed for greater reliability. The Polarotor's patented probe design makes it one of the most efficient collector designs available. At the high-end of its line, the Corotor II dual-band feed combines proven Polarotor technology and co-boresight accuracy, offering the ultimate satellite feedhorn design. Its adjustable scalar rings tailor the reception for every dish, thus effectively eliminating terrestrial interference (T.I.) for the maximum satellite signal performance.

Chaparral is establishing satellite technology as the center of today's home theater trend.

Corotor II dual-band feedhorn.

Twenty-First Century Frox

Introducing a revolutionary multi-media home entertainment system that's as clever as a fox.

The elegance of Frox's menu-driven operating system is rivaled only by the enhancements that Frox has rendered to the NTSC signal.

How do you best take control (and advantage) of the hundreds of new satellite programs that are now downloadable into your living space? How do you even keep track of all the new entertainment options out there, not to mention your own growing music and movie library? Wouldn't it be great to have one, easy-to-operate system that does all this tracking (orbital and otherwise) for you? Relax. Frox is already here, a complete home entertainment system that magically combines an intuitive operating design with the highest quality audio and video processing available.

The Frox home theater is a complete multi-room entertainment system combining several proprietary audio and video advancements. Its unique FroxCast feature uses menu-driven on-screen commands to let you select from all available programs, local TV listings, a library of over 30,000 CDs, a movie library of 40,000 films, and sports news and financial information. All five services are offered for $35 a month, or can be ordered individually. In addition, Lucasfilm's THX division has licensed its Home THX Surround Sound Processing to Frox. It all results in an enhanced home theater experience and an investment in the future of home entertainment.

Unlike any other system, FroxControl combines intuition with reality, offering an unprecedented ease of component operation. You're guided by on-screen graphics that take you easily through all system operations. On-screen buttons appear, controls are revealed, icons and menus engage — all touched by your virtual hand. FroxControl panels and screens act as information "windows," opening new dimensions of interactive information. Library data, local TV grid listings and personalized custom experiences can all be obtained through the FroxControl editing console. TV, VCR or LaserDisc programs can be enjoyed through the FroxControl video panel.

Frox offers three monitor choices: a 12-foot front projector, FroxVision 31-inch direct view monitor, and a 51-inch rear projection system. The FroxVision experience can also be achieved in other rooms of the home beyond the main theater area. For high quality image sources like satellite television or LaserDisc, these improve-

Each Frox multi-room system is operated by the unique FroxWand remote control.

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ments are especially apparent.

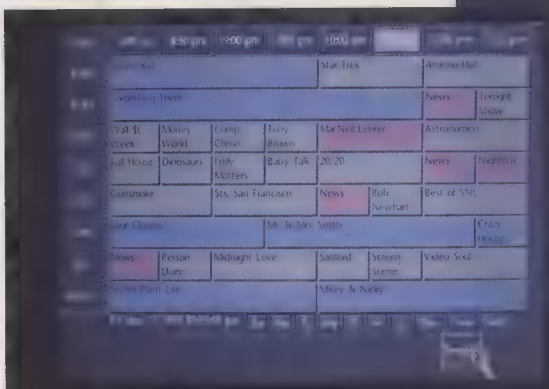
The elegance of Frox's menu-driven operating system and its innovative one-button remote control is rivaled only by the enhancements that Frox technology has rendered to the standard NTSC signal.

Unlike the conventional two-part NTSC signal, which is projected on the television screen in two fields occurring every 60th of a second, Frox's Pro-Active+ Non-Interlaced signal processing eliminates this cause of picture distortion that is so recognizable on other large screen televisions. The process provides exceptional image detail and depth in the removal of visible scanning lines, without the creation of undesirable motion artifacts. The Frox video image provides over 1000 lines of virtual resolution.

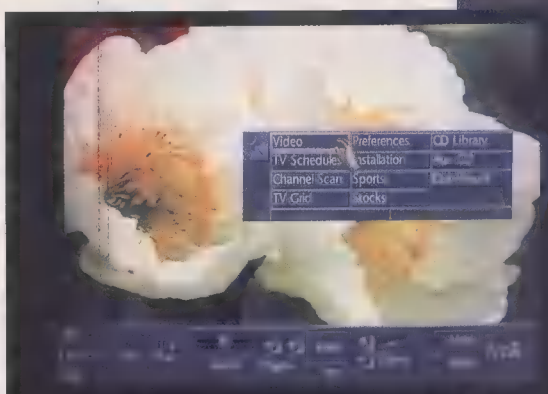
What's more, the FroxSystem can adjust every image parameter (color, tint, brightness, contrast, noise filtering and more) for over 360,000 pixels visible on screen — 40 times the industry standard — 60 times a second. There are over one billion high-speed operations that enhance video performance every second.

Frox employs a combination of patent-pending filters to accurately separate the mixed NTSC luminance and chrominance signals. First, a digital notch filter is used to effectively extract the chroma signal from the luminance information. Any residual black-and-white signal remaining in the color portion is then removed by a digital comb filter. Advanced signal processing in the digital domain can now occur at later refinement stages.

FroxSound is a technical match for FroxVision. The culmination of over four years of research and development towards the goal of digital audio performance, the Frox sound system uses small fiber-optic cables to route the audio signals to the Frox digital loudspeakers. A proprietary technique called Digital Straight Line maintains the digital signal longer than any other system on the market, allowing it to stream directly to the speakers (up to 30 meters away), unaffected by environmental influences. Speaker configurations consist of: front left, right and center; rear left, right, and subwoofer (a configuration designed for Pro Logic theatrical surround effects). With its THX sound technology, the audio/video system provides a theaterical sound effect from any VCR or LaserDisc audio/video source.



FroxControl panels and screens act as "windows", opening new dimensions of information.



The Frox on-screen menu guides you easily through the system operation.

Each multi-room system is operated with a dedicated IR sensor and the unique FroxWand remote control, which virtually eliminates the use for any other remotes. These components allow for the easy access of the main system's features, independently of other zones in the home. Thus, while one household member may be viewing a movie in one room, another person may be listening to a CD in another.

Six Frox components make up the complete multi-room system: the Frox Video Preprocessor receives, enhances and digitizes all incoming video signals; the Media Processor is the heart of the system, housing all memory storage and A/V processing centers; the FroxWand handles all the controls; and you can choose from any of the three FroxVision monitors.

Unlike most products that become obsolete over time, the FroxSystem will accommodate new digital technologies, offer the latest audio processing features and provide cutting-edge video capabilities as they become available. New components will not be required to add new features. The enhancements, provided via broadcast transmissions or by videotape, are customized to meet specific requirements and may be requested as needs arise. The basic system starts at $10,000 with a complete multi-room set-up ranging up to $50,000.

Unlike most products that become obsolete over time, the FroxSystem will accommodate new digital technologies.

NBO offers a full line of direct-view stereo monitor TVs and surround sound equipment for the ultimate satellite home theater system.

DBS SATELLITE TELEVISION™

DBS Satellite Educates & Sells

This leading satellite distributor takes consumer education seriously.

In the same way that satellite television is more than just another entertainment source, DBS (Direct Buying Service) Satellite Television is more than just a mail order satellite dealer. DBS is a complete satellite equipment and installation consulting service.

DBS offers numerous services to help its customers choose equipment and install satellite systems. For do-it-yourself satellite installation, the company provides all necessary technical information and basic installation guidelines by mail or over the phone. But if you prefer to have a professional install your system, DBS will put you in touch with their nationwide network of qualified installers. (For Southern California customers, DBS's own service professionals can meet your installation and repair needs.)

A free brochure introducing DBS' expansive equipment inventory, which includes an informative home satellite buyer's guide, will help you make your purchase decisions. To give customers a more in-depth look at satellite television and equipment, DBS offers the industry's first buyer's guide/catalog on videotape that answers common questions and demonstrates products. The videotape will be available from the company for $19.95 by calling (800) 350-0256 and will include a money back guarantee. To help with any customer technical queries, DBS also offers a toll-free hotline — (800) 350-0256 — with qualified satellite technicians standing by.

Along with numerous customer services, DBS also offers the industry's most complete lineup of state-of-the-art satellite equipment. Some of the more popular brands include Chaparral, Houston Tracker Systems (HTS), Echostar, General Instrument and California Amplifier.

The message the company wants all home entertainment buffs to hear is that satellite television offers more choices and quality at affordable prices. Satellite's flexibility and quality are unmatched due to new technological breakthroughs.

Among the innovations in satellite technology being touted by DBS are improved audio quality due to digitized audio signals and phenomenal video resolution that surpasses the visual quality of even the best cable system.

Says the company's sales manager Michael Byrd, "Whether it's only one of your choices or your only choice, satellite television is the best choice for all-around home theater entertainment."

For a free catalog, call DBS at (800) 734-4SAT. In California call (800) 327-2345. You can fax them at (800) 652-2190 or write to them at 2316 Channel Drive; Ventura, CA 93003.

The Decade of the Dish

NBO deals satellite TV technology direct to consumers.

The satellite industry stands poised to become the home video technology of the nineties, "The Decade of the Dish." High resolution video and digital audio make satellite the medium of choice for many Americans who want to improve

NBO

the quality of home viewing. The rest of this decade should witness great strides in both the development and penetration of the technology.

NBO — Name Brands Only — in Carlsbad, California, brings satellite TV to Americans by direct mail, offering discount pricing, 100 percent financing (as low as $29/mo.), guaranteed do-it-yourself installation, name brands only, 10-minute dish alignment and toll-free help when needed. In addition to satellite TV, NBO offers a full line of direct-view stereo monitor TVs and surround sound equipment for the ultimate satellite home theater system.

Call NBO anytime (800-346-6466) for their free catalog and information about the satellite TV home theater experience.

ON THE FLY: NEW SERVICES COMING IN '92

- *The Asia Network*
- *Career Channel Network*
- *The Chiller Channel*
- *Cowboy TV Network*
- *The Food Channel*
- *The Global Channel*
- *Global Village Network*
- *The How-To Channel*
- *Maximum Entertainment*
- *Senior American Network*
- *The Sci-Fi Channel (Fall)*
- *Talk Television*

(info provided by SBCA)

Industry Sky Watching

The SBCA offers a wide range of satellite industry services.

Satellite home theater is growing fast. And the SBCA (Satellite Broadcasting and Communications Association of America) is the organization that's responsible for providing the most up-to-date information on this home electronics technology trend. The SBCA's several hundred members include satellite manufacturers, distributors, dealers and programming professionals.

Overall, the organization is devoted to expanding the use of satellite technology in all broadcasting arenas. The SBCA is also outspoken in its belief in the technology, which has been growing in leaps and bounds, both in scientific advancements and in consumer acceptance throughout the U.S. and worldwide.

Why has satellite TV grown so rapidly as the programming choice for home theater owners?

"With a satellite system, the signals come straight from the satellite," says SBCA spokesperson Linda Brill. "By eliminating the cable carrier you save a generation and the quality is so much better. Satellite not only delivers digital quality sound equal to a compact disc, but also provides crystal clear digital video. If the consumer is spending several thousand dollars on a sophisticated home theater system, why not spend a couple of thousand more to ensure that they get the most out of it?"

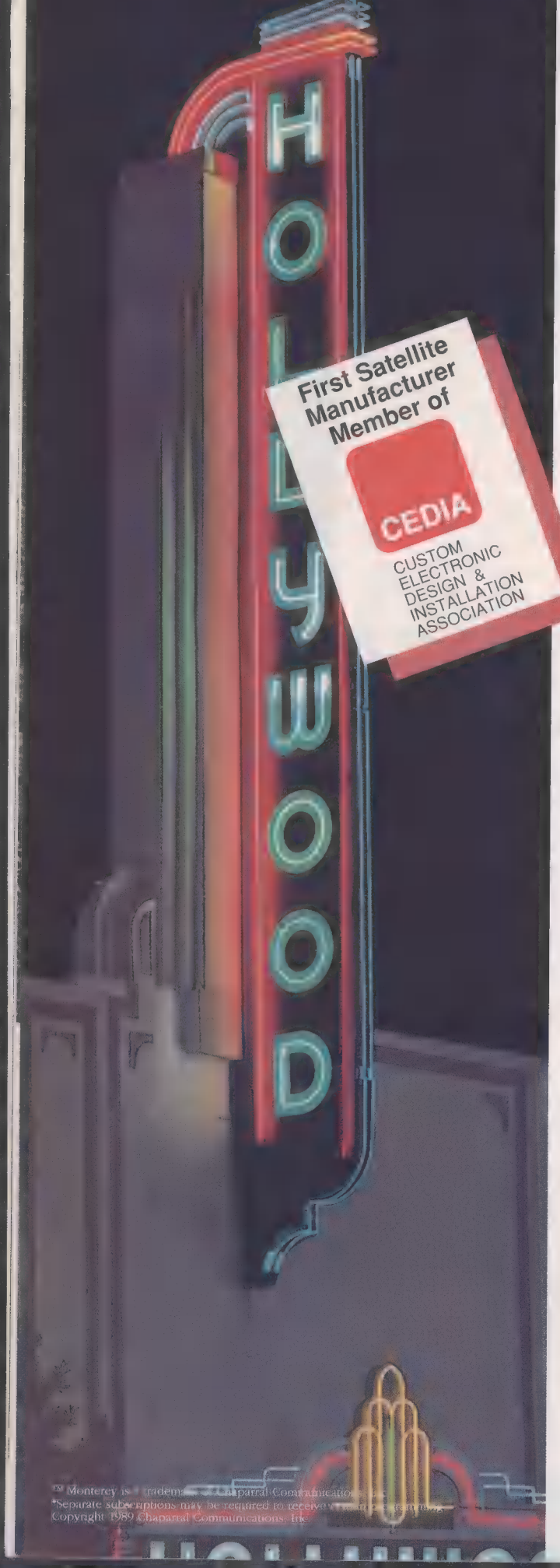
According to the SBCA, there are currently 3.6 million home satellite owners in the United States, receiving programming from more than two dozen satellites floating in stationary orbit 22,300 miles above the equator. There are more than 200 channels of television programs now available, offering over 1,500 movies monthly, six different sports networks (offering more than 1,600 baseball games per year), several 24 hour news stations, music television from the U.S., Canada and Mexico, 10 video shopping channels and audio-only services. There are over 80 subscription services available to the average satellite TV owner, with an additional 75 unscrambled services, and 75 audio program services.

Along with promoting the benefits of satellite use, the SBCA serves as a source of technological, legislative and general industry information.

For more information contact the SBCA at 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 600, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 549-6990.

The SBCA serves as a source of technological, legislative and general industry information.

SBCA



The Best Pictures ...Simply

Where would you go for the best pictures? The local theater? The video store? Now, with the **Monterey® Model 90 Satellite Receiver** from Chaparral, get all the best movies, sports, news, and family programming direct to your home theater via satellite. Direct-to-home satellite broadcast is the best programming delivery system available providing crystal clear video and digital audio quality.

The Monterey Model 90 and satellite reception completes your home theater system with variety and performance superior to cable TV, VCR, or laser disc.

The best pictures are yours because the Monterey Model 90 satellite receiver offers more features including:

- **Picture-in-Picture** that lets you enjoy two program sources at the same time,
- **MTS Stereo Encoder** converts left/right audio sources to the multi-television-stereo format for easy distribution throughout your system,
- **4-Way Video/Audio Switcher & UHF Remote Control** lets you choose from a variety of video and audio components from anywhere in your home,
- **Digital Audio** is standard on all subsciption services using the integrated descrambler module and
- **4-Stage Video Noise Reduction** removes unwanted video noise and improves signal to noise ratio.

Monterey satellite receivers by Chaparral bring you the best pictures, right in your own home! Contact Chaparral for the name of your nearest professional satellite system integrator.

Circle 53 on Reader Service Card.

CHAPARRAL COMMUNICATIONS

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™ Monterey is a trademark of Chaparral Communications, Inc.
*Separate subscriptions may be required to receive premium programming.
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All the Extras: Canon's UCS1 has a concealed jack panel (above left) and ■ snap-off remote (below).

VIDEOTEST 628

CANON *Hi8 camcorder*

Canon has shown tremendous dedication to video by developing many of the industry's most innovative camcorders, such as the SLR-shaped A1 series, the interchangeable-lens L1 and the sandwich-sized UC1. The UCS1 is a slightly larger, far more sophisticated version of the UC1 ("Videotests," Jan. '92). To the UC1's extensive feature list, the UCS1 adds Hi8 recording capability, stereo sound, ■ programmed auto exposure system, ■ two-speed 10x zoom and a microphone with adjustable pickup angle.

Concealed within the UCS1 is a new transport that is lighter and slimmer

continued on page 28

Canon UCS1 Hi8 Camcorder

Price: $2,099

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 1.7 lbs. without battery, cassette and controller; 5-1/8 x 3-1/4 x 6-3/4 inches

Image Sensor: 1/3-inch CCD, 410,000 pixels

Lens: f/1.8, 10x (6-60mm) two-speed power zoom

Filter Diameter: 37mm

Minimum Focusing Distance: 1 cm in wide-angle

Autofocus: internal-focus design with fuzzy logic, switchable to manual power focus, continuous to macro

Minimum Illumination: measured—2.2 lux gain up, 7.3 lux normal

Iris: auto/manual plus 5 program AE modes—sand & snow, landscape, spotlight, portrait and sports

Auto Fade: 4 sec., hold-down or trigger operated

Shutter Speeds (sec.): 1/60 (normal), 1/100, 1/250, 1/500, 1/1,000, 1/2,000, 1/4,000, 1/10,000

White Balance: auto with lock in manual mode

Viewfinder: electronic with diopter and on-screen indicators for menus, gain up, high shutter speed, exposure, trigger fade, program AE, tally lamp, remote sensor, timer recording, timer record menu, line in, operating mode, tape counter, date, time, Hi8, title memory/display, character title, scroll, wipe, digital title mode, auto wind screen, mic angle, bilingual, edit mode and focus mode

Viewfinder Controls: diopter focus

VCR Controls: play, fast forward/search, rewind/search, still, stop and counter reset; tape return to zero on remote only

Microphone: stereo with narrow, wide and zoom modes

Jacks: external mic, headphones, LANC remote, S-video/video/stereo audio input/output, DC out for RFU

Tape Format & Speed: Hi8, 8mm; SP only

Video Heads: 4

Cue & Review Search: 9x and 15x forward, 7x reverse

Fast Forward/Rewind Time: 8 min. for 120-min. tape

Remote Pause: LANC

Remote Control: IR wireless with buttons for camcorder—run/stop, wide angle, tele and onscreen; for VCR—record, play, stop, pause/still, fast forward/search, rewind/search, counter reset and tape return

Counter Digits: 5—hrs:mins:secs.

Audio: hi-fi AFM stereo

Titles/Graphics: two pages of digital memory in one of eight colors with normal, reverse, see-through, scroll, wipe, both pages, alternating (animation), and shadow; plus two lines of 16 characters each

Special Features: still frame, insert edit, internal focus lens with glass aspherical lens element, programmed auto exposure, digital and character graphics

Absent Features: PCM audio, audio dub, time code, indexing

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: camera—450-460 lines; recorder—380 lines

S/N Ratios (dB): luminance—unweighted 45.4, weighted 50.2; video—unweighted 41.3, weighted 49.7; chroma AM—41.8, chroma PM—40.8

Audio Frequency Response: 100 Hz-15 kHz, +0.1/-3 dB; -6.8 dB at 20 Hz; -4.2 dB at 20 kHz

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range: 76.3 dB

Audio Distortion: 0.3%

HIGHLIGHTS

Canon's UCS1 is an amazingly compact, capable Hi8 camcorder. It offers five programmed auto exposure modes, including sports, portrait and landscape; ■ two-page titler with transparency, scrolling and simple animation; and ■ removable infrared remote control. Picture, audio, ease of use and overall performance are all very good to excellent. It is ■ bit pricey at $2,099, but its features and performance make it worth the extra investment.

RATINGS

Picture: very good/excellent

Audio: very good/excellent

Ease of Use: very good/excellent

Overall: very good/excellent

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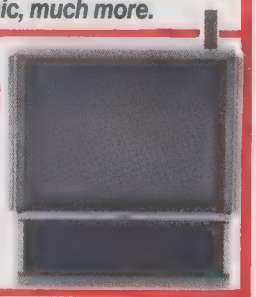

TOSHIBA 32" w/Caner Sonic Holography Sound.

35" JVC Super Input Mts.

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S & H NON-REFUNDABLE!

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Hi8 CAMCORDER

continued from page 27

than those in other compact 8mm models. An ultracompact internal-focus lens system with a glass aspheric element helped shrink the size of the zoom lens to complement the tiny transport.

The programmed auto exposure modes, first seen on Sony's CCD-V101, are a big step forward in video. Each mode uses a different set of priorities to optimize the shutter speed/iris relationship for the subject. For example, in portrait mode the camcorder opens the iris to the widest position the light level will allow, then uses the shutter speed to control exposure. This gives a shallow depth of field and throws the background out of focus to minimize distractions. By contrast, in landscape mode the camcorder closes the iris to the smallest aperture (so more of the picture is in focus) and varies the shutter speed to control exposure.

If the light is too weak, the UCS1 employs automatic gain-up circuitry in certain auto exposure modes (but not in all modes because increasing gain also boosts noise). This automatic application of principles developed in still photography makes the UCS1's exposure system very attractive to those who don't have photographic expertise. The system is even useful for professionals, because it speeds up operation.

The camcorder also includes a detachable infrared remote control, fuzzy-logic autofocus almost to the face of the lens, 24-zone auto white balance, seven shutter speeds, both hold-down and trigger-operated fade to white, blank tape search, tally light on/off, infrared sensor on/off and a self timer. It has a LANC remote control jack for use when editing with Sony VCRs or numerous brands of editing controllers.

The UCS1 is slightly more than an inch longer than the UC1, and about a third of a pound heavier. A powered manual focus ring, a stereo microphone and a jack compartment highlight the front. The viewfinder tilts up a bit past 90 degrees, revealing a secondary run/stop button. An edit erase button on top lets the user retake a shot, as long as the shot has lasted no longer than 10 seconds. The zoom rocker and primary run/stop button occupy their usual places under the right hand.

The most noteworthy control is a large rotary switch for exposure settings, with positions for sand and snow, landscape, spotlight, portrait, sports, automatic and manual. Nearby sit camera controls for functions such as white balance, fade, manual iris plus and minus, digital title memorize, shutter speed and the menu system.

Cleverly concealed on the right side is a removable remote control and access to the eject button and cassette hatch. The remote operates all transport functions, plus zoom and run/stop.

The big, clearly labeled knob makes programmed automatic exposure easy even for novices. To use the manual options correctly, you need a little knowledge of photography. The digital memory titler can be operated without reading the manual, thanks to dedicated buttons. Some options are accessible only through the menu system. These are more difficult to use, not only because they are spread over five menu pages, but because you often forget they exist.

Four menu pages are available in camera mode, with such useful features as trigger fade, gain up, self timer, digital title transparency and scroll/wipe, auto mic windscreen, wide/narrow/zoom mic angle, line in, tally on/off and IR sensor on/off. In play mode, the menu offers a bilingual function, for listening to the audio as separate tracks, edit mode to maintain quality in dubbing and IR sensor on/off. Ease of operation is very good, becoming excellent with practice.

The UCS1's camera has a horizontal resolution of 450 to 460 lines, which is outstanding. Otherwise, the measurements are very good to excellent—better than you might expect from such a tiny machine. The auto exposure programs work well. The gain-up mode allows shooting at light levels as low as 2 lux, but with a bit more noise. Audio quality is also very good to excellent, for an overall rating of very good to excellent. With the UCS1, Hi8 users can shed weight and bulk, but sacrifice almost nothing in performance. ■

TECH TIP

Simplified stereo

An easy, inexpensive way to improve the sound of a TV set is to use extension speakers designed for personal stereos. This only works if your set has a headphone jack. Just plug the speakers into the jack (they can be powered or unpowered) and your sound will come alive. If the cables are long enough, you can set the speakers outside the window when doing yard work. If you have a monophonic TV set, you will have to use a 1/8-inch mono-to-stereo adapter to get both speakers to work.

Tim O'Brien
Anaheim, California

A picture so real it could fool the Audubon Society.

Is this a television set or a tropical bird act?

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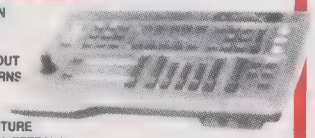

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EDITED BY BRIAN CLARK

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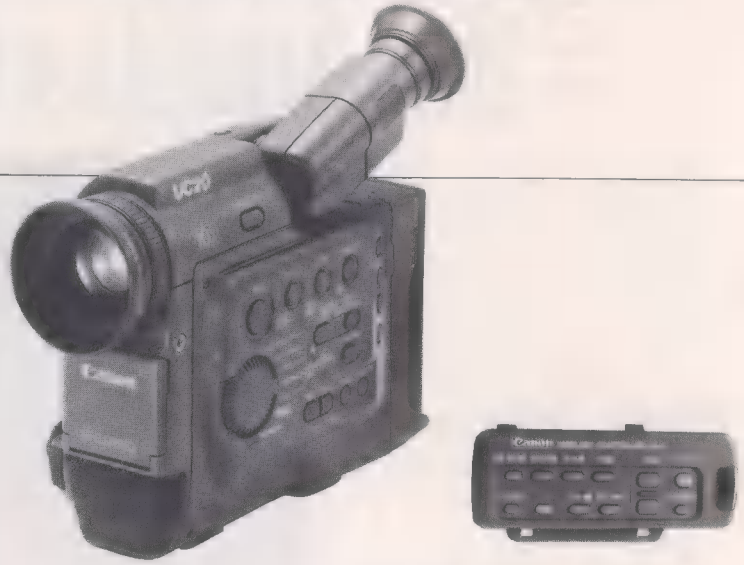
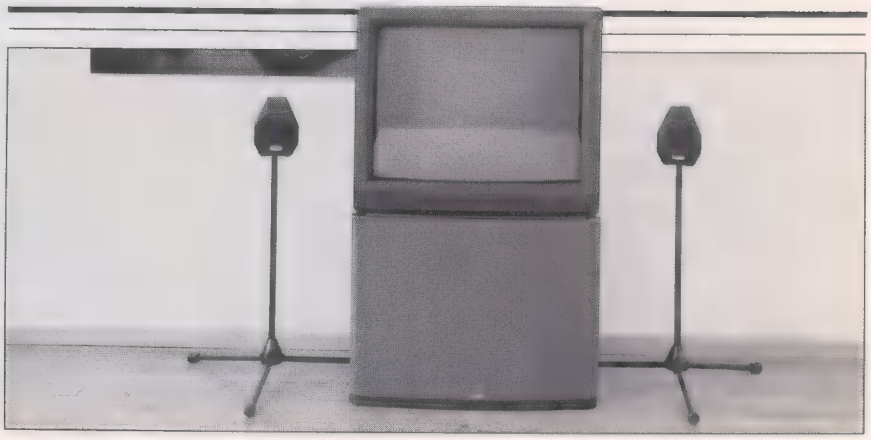


Canon adds UC-series camcorder

Canon's UC20 8mm camcorder follows in the footsteps of its groundbreaking UC1 8mm and UCS1 Hi8 models. In fact, it is an 8mm equivalent of the UCS1. Significant features include five auto exposure modes in addition to auto and manual, a 10x lens and a character generator. The auto exposure modes include sports, portrait, spotlight, landscape, and sand and snow. Backlight compensation is automatic, and exposure is taken from a combination reading of the entire image and a central zone. Other features include AFM stereo sound, seven shutter speeds and LANC editing compatibility.

Price: $1,849.

Circle 146 on Reader Service Card.



Carver designs home theater speaker system

Carver's TS-D60 home theater speaker system has a subwoofer and center-channel speaker built into a TV stand, and two front speakers. The satellite speakers are made of cast aluminum, with the woofers and cabinet molded together as one piece. Aluminum was chosen to cut down on unwanted vibrations. The system works with amps from 50 to 375 watts, and is intended for monitors up to 32 inches. Two rear speakers (TS-S20) are sold separately for $195 per pair. A second system, the TS-P80, is designed for rear-projection sets up to 60 inches.

Price: $1,000.

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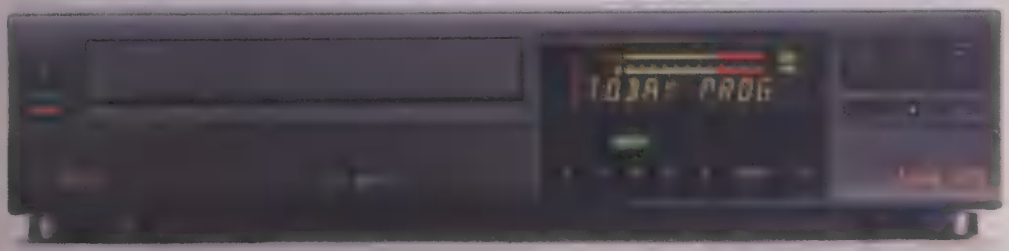

HR-S4700U

HR-S6700U

JVC engineered the new HR-S4700 and HR-S6700 with one primary design criteria – a standard of excellence to please even the most discerning videophile. Each delivers uncompromised performance – from the high resolution picture that Super VHS is renown for, to the rock-solid reliability that JVC built its reputation on.

S-VHS picture quality has been even further refined in these models by the incorporation of advanced processing circuitry such as a Logical Comb Filter and a Color Response Improvement circuit. Hi-Fi VHS stereo sound enhances the video experience by delivering more than 90dB of dynamic range. The HR-S6700 even includes a built-in audio processor with 5 different settings to augment any home theatre environment. Flying erase head and front panel A/V inputs make these VCRs fully capable components for a home editing system. JVC's intelligent on-screen menu, access functions and comprehensive remote controls make the outstanding performance of each model easy to enjoy.

We invite you to visit your authorized JVC dealer for a complete demonstration of the HR-S4700 and HR-S6700 high resolution VCRs – OUR NEW STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE!

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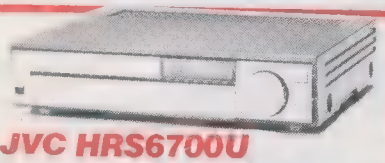

JVC HRS6700U

SVHS Hi-Fi w/MTS, Spectra built in sound processor, digital tracking, front A/V pack, insert edit, Tog dial shuttle, auto head clean.

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Super VHS, 7 head Hi-Fi MTS & Spectra Sonic, real time counter with digital tracking, auto head clean, Tog dial/shuttle ring, amorphous heads.

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Sharp marches forward in LCD projection

Sharp's XV-S250U LCD video projector has nearly 2.5 times the number of pixels as its earlier models, for sharper, cleaner images. A projection distance of 10 feet produces an 80-inch picture, while a distance of 12.5 feet produces a 100-inch picture. The projector connects to any video source, including game players. A reverse image video feature makes the image suitable for rear projection. Weighing only 28 pounds, the projector is easily moved from room to room.

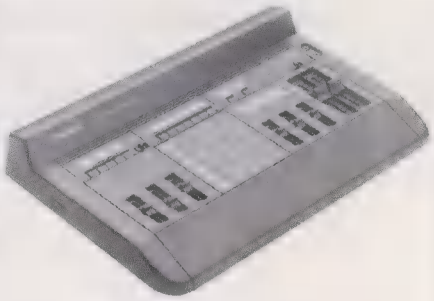
Price: $6,495.

Circle 148 on Reader Service Card.

Ambico mixer offers variety of effects

Ambico's V-6300 audio/video editing effects mixer performs wipes in numerous colors and patterns. It can also control pattern edges and angles, while its stereo audio mixer can handle three sources. The V-6300 also has a "black burst" output, which produces a solid video black to fade to or to use as a background, and which is compatible with a timebase corrector or a genlocked camera, permitting synchronized special effects.

Price: $399.



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Mini TV/monitor fits in pocket

Citizen's P522 pocket LCD TV has a 2.2-inch screen and weighs just 12 ounces. It can also serve as a video monitor for playback or for viewing during recording. Measuring five by three inches, the set is powered by four AA batteries, an AC adapter or a car battery adapter, and comes with a soft case.

Price: $169.

Circle 150 on Reader Service Card.

20-inch set included in new Goldstar TV series for 1992

Goldstar's new 20-inch TV set, the CMT-2196, features onscreen displays of channel selection and volume and picture adjustments. The cable-compatible tuner offers 181 channels. The picture tube is high-contrast dark glass with a special tinting. A random access remote control is included.

Price: $329.95.

Circle 151 on Reader Service Card.

Q&A

BY RODERICK WOODCOCK

PIP strategies, Faroudja and the future of S-VHS

Q One of the ads in your magazine states, "All camcorders made by Faroudja." Aren't all the camcorders shown made by Sony? Also, I was told that my Ricoh R-86S is the same camcorder as Sony's CCD-TR7, but with a better lens. Is this true?

Dr. P. Harsany
Montreal, Canada

A "Faroudja" refers to Yves Faroudja, an innovative engineer who holds numerous video-related patents. His image processing circuitry is used under license by Sony, Hitachi and Mitsubishi, among others, to enhance the quality of NTSC imagery, especially on Hi8 and S-VHS VCRs and camcorders. These products carry a label that says, "Technology licensed by Faroudja Laboratories, Inc."

The copywriter for the advertiser in question, Lewis & Clark, apparently misread the label, and drew the erroneous conclusion that Faroudja manufactured all the camcorders. Its latest ad correctly attributes manufacture to Sony, Hitachi and other companies.

As for the lens on your Ricoh R-86S, the question of who actually provides the glass for the lens remains a contentious issue, but representatives of Ricoh, Nikon and Kyocera have told me their camcorders use the same lenses as comparable Sony models. Sony sources its lenses from a variety of Japanese companies, including Tamron and Fuji. It's likely that lenses of different origin may find their way onto different models, or even different samples of the same model. In any case, all the lenses have resolutions far in excess of what's needed to record 8mm and Hi8 images, so you shouldn't be concerned about the origin of your lens.

Video Magazine welcomes your questions. Please include a phone number, but not a return envelope as the volume of mail does not permit replies. All letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address queries to Q & A, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

Q I'm producing an instructional tape and want to put my picture in the corner of the screen. Will I be able to do this with one of those picture-in-picture VCRs?

William Rondo
Miami, Florida

A Yes. Most VCRs with PIP alternate between the picture from the tape being played and images from the tuner or an external video source. The external source can be the live output from a video camera focused on you. Or it can be a tape played from a camcorder or a second VCR, fed through the PIP deck's audio/video or RF input. To combine these two images permanently, you'll need a third VCR, connected to the RF or A/V outputs of the PIP VCR. Most PIP VCRs let you move the inset box to any corner of the screen, and swap the two pictures.

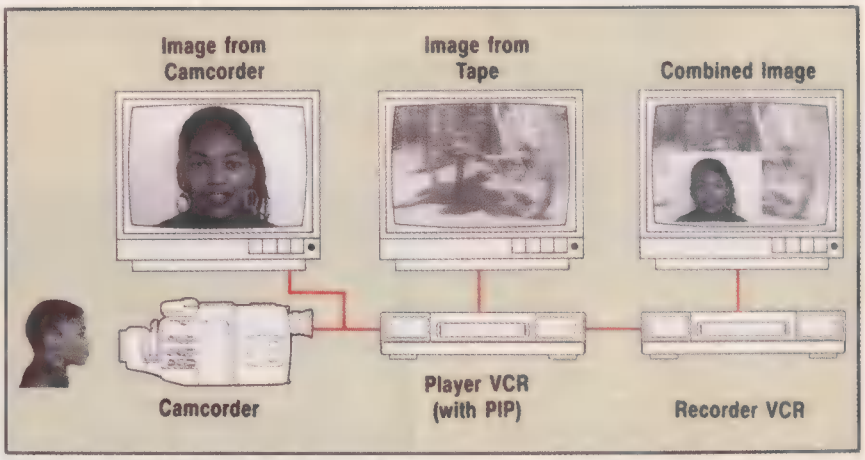
I tested this by playing one tape from a camcorder through the auxiliary input of my JVC HR-S8000 VCR, while playing back another tape on the VCR. The PIP effect appeared on the monitor connected to the JVC, and I recorded it on a third VCR. It's complicated, but it works. You can also achieve this with a dedicated effects generator such as Panasonic's WJ-AVE5 A/V mixer.

Q What's in the future for S-VHS? Is there an improved version on the horizon? Who makes an S-VHS camcorder with interchangeable lenses?

Jim Doreck
Seaside, California

A JVC denies that any new, improved version of S-VHS is in the offing. Any change in the format, such as moving the carrier frequency higher up into the spectrum, or using metal-particle tape, would create a new, incompatible format. I suspect the next upgrade in video recording will be a digital format, but it's too early to say whether it will be based on half-inch tape, 8mm or something else. (For a more detailed response, see "A Tale of Two Formats," Jan. '92.)

Panasonic's professional video division sells a modular S-VHS camcorder that can use a variety of C-mount lenses. So far, only Canon's Hi8 L1 system conforms to the VL lens mount standard agreed on by Sony, Matsushita and others. But there's hope—Mitsubishi may soon introduce an S-VHS-C camcorder with a simplified interchangeable lens system. It's been shown in Europe and should migrate to the U.S. early this year. ■



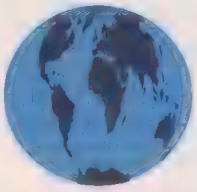
Video Window: In this editing setup, a VCR with picture-in-picture combines video from a tape it is playing with images from a camcorder connected to its video input. A second VCR records the result.

VERA NAUGHTON

BY STEWART WOLPIN

10 DECKS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

How 15 years of fast & furious invention shaped today's VCR



Movie renting. Timer setting. Tape editing. Audio dubbing. Title typing. Fifteen years ago these simple home video tasks were the stuff of the future. They just didn't exist, impossible as this may seem to a generation raised in the video age. Today the VCR is the most culturally pervasive product of the last quarter century, the brightly flashing "12:00" a weary comic staple. All these features and more are now taken for granted.

But they weren't always. Today's top VCRs are the result of a fevered and very public perfection process that began in 1976 when the first Betamax was dropped on a public that wanted to watch both *Kojak* and *Columbo* at 9 p.m. on Sunday. But new features premiered so rapidly that the VCRs bearing them were being introduced before the warranties had run out on the older models.

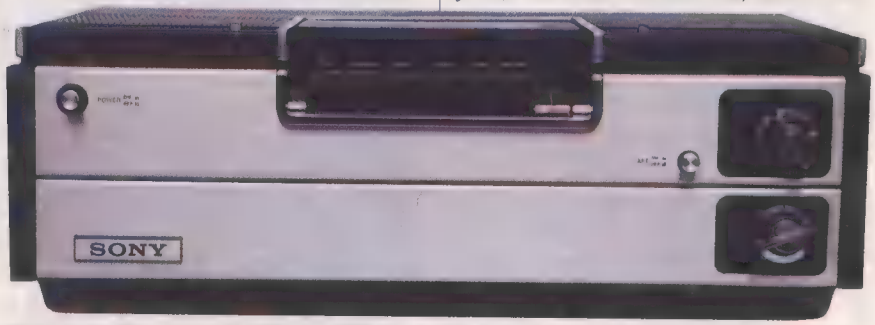
Now, hundreds of models later with the consumer VCR enjoying its 15th anniversary, it seems a fitting time to look back and celebrate the classic components that kept video at the cutting edge of the science of entertainment—10 decks that shook the world of video, and that helped video shake up the world.

1 YOUR FIRST VCR

No matter what has happened to Beta since, Sony's SL-7200 Betamax, the first successful stand-alone consumer VCR in the U.S., so shaped the primitive video landscape that for years after its debut Betamax was an informal synonym for VCR, even after VHS had claimed the field. The $1,295 SL-7200 appeared in 1976, six months after Sony experimented with the LV-1901, a clumsy TVCR combination. But the SL-7200, despite its radical presence, also had some limitations, including an outboard timer and only the one-hour Beta 1 speed. Although Sony soon corrected these drawbacks with the SL-8200, they blunted Beta's head start.

2 COUNTERATTACK

JVC, which invented VHS, announced



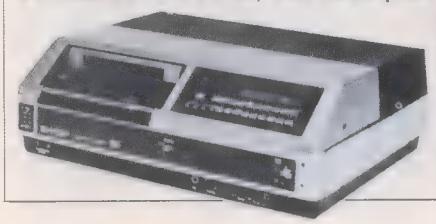
Video to the Max: Sony's SL-7200, the VCR that added Betamax to the English language.

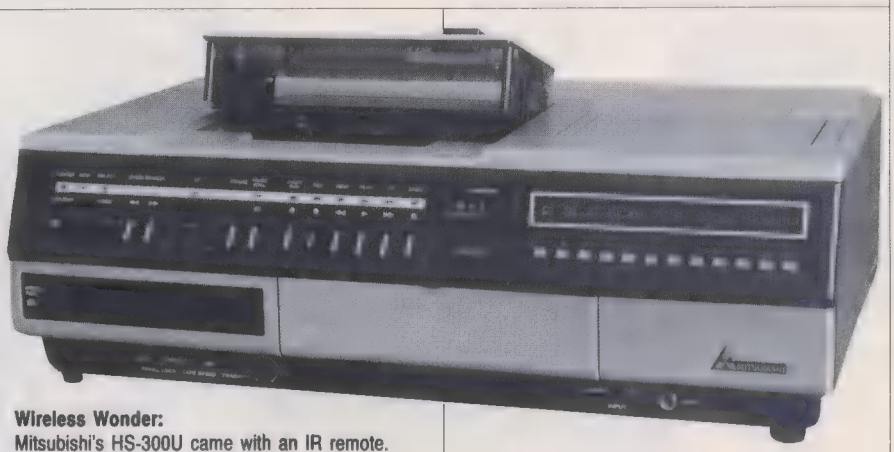
its first VHS deck in June 1977. But two months earlier, RCA, thanks to a deal with Matsushita, was able to beat JVC to the punch with its SelectaVision VBT200, the first VHS VCR to hit store shelves. It was also the first VCR with both the two-hour SP speed *and* the four-hour LP speed, along with a built-in 24-hour clock/timer. It also came packaged with one blank and seven prerecorded tapes. Despite this, it was $300 cheaper than Sony's SL-7200. The price, the features and a $4 million advertising campaign helped sell 50,000 units in the first year, giving VHS a powerful foothold in the market.

3

MOVING OUT IN FRONT

At first, the VCR sat alone. Its top-loading cassette mechanism made it impossible to stack—until 1980 and Sharp's VC6800, the first front-loading VCR. The hatch, recessed above and behind the control buttons, responded to a series of controls that have long since been automated. However, the deck possessed other innovative features, such as the first electronic tape index system.





Wireless Wonder: Mitsubishi's HS-300U came with an IR remote.

4

INSTANT GRATIFICATION

TV sets had offered wireless remote controls for years, but it wasn't until the fall of 1980 and Mitsubishi's HS-300U that the couch potato's favorite feature appeared on a VCR. However, it was offered as a $100 option, over and above the deck's $1,350 suggested price. The machine was also noteworthy for using an innovative multimotor technology similar to audio cassette decks, a radical design that eliminated about 700 parts, largely by replacing them with more reliable electronic parts.

5

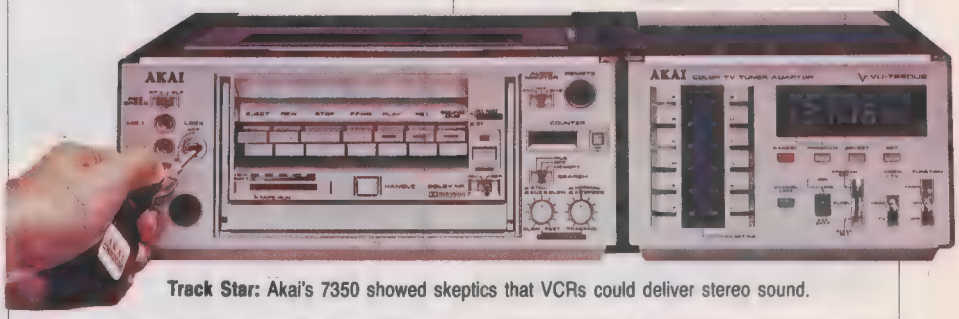
BREAKING THE SOUND BARRIER

True stereo sound with Dolby processing debuted in the Akai 7350 in 1981. But the stereo was the linear track variety. A *Video Magazine* "Videotest" found the frequency response to range from 40 to 9,000 Hertz (+/-3 decibels) at the SP speed and from 40 to 6,000 Hz at EP with a 50 dB signal-to-noise ratio with Dolby. Although the deck had the usual output jacks for hookup to an amp, the only stereo inputs were through microphone jacks, requiring combination adapters to prevent line level signals from overloading mic level circuits. The headphone jack, audio dub and the RF output were all mono. Nevertheless, the deck showed skeptics that the 1 millimeter mono linear track could be split into two 1/3mm stereo tracks with a 1/3mm guard band between them.

6

COMPACT CASSETTE

JVC took the wraps off VHS-C in June 1982, but not as a camcorder format. The cute little JVC HR-C3 VCR weighed just 4.4 pounds and measured a tiny 7-1/4 inches wide by 8 inches deep by 3 inches high. It was accompanied by the GZ-S3, a small video camera. The combo had great monaural sound and average picture quality, but VHS-C



Track Star: Akai's 7350 showed skeptics that VCRs could deliver stereo sound.

10 DECKS

proved to consumers that home video still held major surprises.

7

VIDEO FIT TO HEAR

In March 1983 Sony's SL-5200 Betamax vaulted into true hi-fi sound, while keeping the price under $1,000. With a frequency response of 20 to 19,000 Hz and an S/N of 73 dB, it offered the best

audio performance consumers could then find. Sony sandwiched the audio, recorded as a four-channel FM signal rather than an AM signal, between the chroma and the luminance signals. This reduced distortion, wow and flutter.

8

SOUND REBOUND

Sony claimed VHS would never duplicate Beta hi-fi. Within months it was proven wrong. JVC demonstrated a VHS deck that used stereo audio heads mounted 180 degrees apart on a newly developed double-azimuth rotating head drum. The audio signals were laid down ahead of the video signal and deeper in the tape than the VHS video information. To avoid crosstalk, JVC developed a seemingly magical Depth Multiplexing system, which laid the audio and video signals at different depths within the

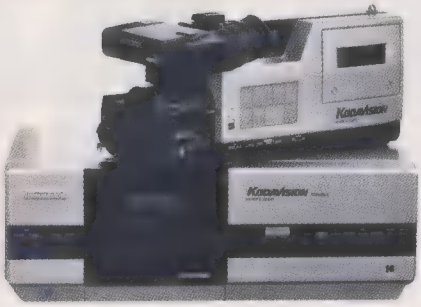
tape's magnetic coating. But there was a problem with the noise reduction circuit and production languished. Finally, in the spring of 1984, RCA again muted Sony's glory with the VKT550, the first hi-fi VHS VCR for consumers.

Time Pundit: RCA's VR690HF, the first deck to include VCR Plus programming circuitry.

9

BRAND NEW FORMAT

The first 8mm machine premiered in 1984 in an offbeat device called the KodaVision 2000 System. Marketed by Kodak and built by Matsushita, it consisted of the first 8mm camcorder, an optional ivory-colored cradle into which the camcorder fit and an optional tuner/tim-



er module. Together, these three components added up to a standard, somewhat clunky VCR. At the time, only 10 percent of American homes had VCRs and Kodak hoped its approach would put it on the video hardware map. It didn't, but it did introduce the world to 8mm.

10

TAMING TIMESHIFTING

No matter how manufacturers tried to simplify timeshifting over the years (through buttons, onscreen calendars, bar-code remotes and the like), a lot of people continued to find programming VCRs difficult and confusing. The solution arrived in 1990 in the form of VCR Plus, an ingenious accessory by Gemstar that uses simple, widely published codes to virtually automate the task. Instantly popular, VCR Plus circuitry was soon built into VCRs, with RCA's 1991 VR690HF the first deck to sport the feature. Zenith and Toshiba have also announced VCRs with VCR Plus and other companies are likely to follow, ending, so it would seem, any lingering complaints over the process of timeshifting. ■

9 VCR Classics

Since VCRs change faster than New York Yankee managers, it's hard to single out only 10 for their significance. Plenty more have caused notable tremors in the world of video, usually by premiering innovative features that are now taken for granted. For example, in March 1978 **JVC's HR-3600** featured visible scan, making it possible to zip easily through commercials for the first time, even though the 2x speed seems dismally slow by today's standards.

VCRs leaped ahead twice in 1984, first with the appearance of the **RCA VJP900**, the first "docking" portable, then, around Christmas, when **Mitsubishi's HS-400U** became the first VCR to boast MTS stereo. As 1985 began, **Sony's Video 8 CCD** earned a double honor as the first 8mm VCR and the first VCR to possess PCM audio.

Resolution Solution: JVC's HR-S7000U, the first S-VHS VCR.

Early in 1986, the **NEC V-10U** added HQ circuitry to the VHS format. Later in the year, **NEC's DX-1000** introduced video noise reduction circuitry and **JVC's HR-D570** introduced digital special effects to VCRs. The next year, 1987, saw **Toshiba's DX-900** add PCM audio to VHS. More significantly, **JVC's HR-S7000U** introduced Super VHS, a formate upgrade embraced by videophiles and many professionals, that boosted resolution to more than 400 lines. —SW

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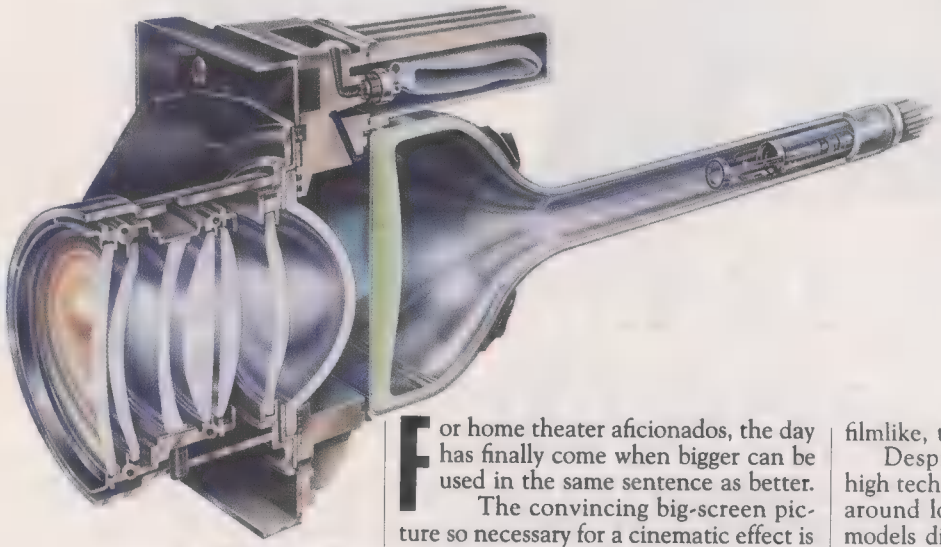
BY RON GOLDBERG

FORMULA-1 VIDEO

A new breed of innovative front projectors is delivering sharper, brighter and bigger pictures.



The Inside Story: Diagram of a Mitsubishi projector tube, showing (right to left) the electron gun, the phosphor screen, the passage for cooling fluid, and spherical and aspherical lenses.

For home theater aficionados, the day has finally come when bigger can be used in the same sentence as better.

The convincing big-screen picture so necessary for a cinematic effect is video's greatest challenge—after all, it's hard to lose yourself in Oz or Gotham City when you measure them in inches rather than feet. Projection TV has traditionally portrayed itself as the solution, but many have considered it a compromised technology. Bigger, yes—but satisfactory? Not all enthusiasts would have thought so until recently. Thanks to engineering advances in cathode-ray tubes (CRTs), electronics and screens, front-projection video now equals, if not surpasses, direct-view TV, and is creeping closer and closer to a filmlike, theatrical experience.

Despite its aura of newly minted high tech, projection television has been around longer than the VCR. Today's models differ little in concept from the warhorse designs used in business presentations and trade shows for the past 20 years. These days, however, the source material for professional presentation applications is as likely to be a computer as a VCR.

Computer images require higher resolution playback than do NTSC signals, and have spurred substantial refinements in projection hardware. New components had to be developed to cope with these demanding "data-grade" applications—as well as with high-quality video sources like laserdiscs

Muscle Projector: Vidikron's VPF40, with a sleek Pininfarina design, compatible with HDTV standards.

and satellite feeds. The refined projection technology eventually crossed over to the consumer market (meaning us), resulting in striking improvements in projector performance and reliability.

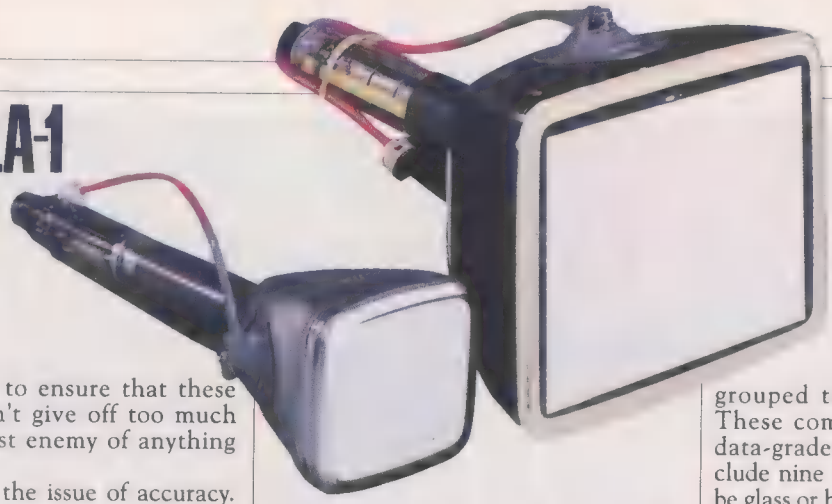
Virtually all the better front-projection monitors use CRTs, as opposed to the still-emerging LCD projectors offered by Sharp, Philips and other manufacturers. While the infant LCD technology has a lot going for it in terms of convenience and flexibility, the traditional tube design still delivers a better picture.

The idea behind conventional CRT projection sets is familiar: Incoming video signals are broken down into red, green and blue components, each of which gets its own tube. The tubes project three overlapped images forward onto a reflective screen (or for rear-projection use, behind an absorptive one), and together, they produce full-color video. At this writing, the innovative Mitsubishi VS-1000 is the only exception to this rule. The unit combines the output from the red, blue and green CRTs internally by way of a mirror system. Once the colors are blended in the projector, they're sent out through a single lens. Whether other manufacturers will follow Mitsubishi's bold stroke remains to be seen.

3-Way Video: The versatile Barcovision 600S accepts video, S-video and RGB signals.

Naturally, video projector engineering is much simpler in theory than in practice. The goal is formidable—a larger-than-life picture that can somehow retain the brightness, clarity and reliability of a much smaller direct-view set. Think of the obstacles: To create a picture bright enough to cover most of a wall, you need immense light output.

FORMULA-1



Start With a Tube: As with CRTs for conventional TV sets, projection tubes come in a variety of sizes, like these five- and nine-inch models.

Next, you have to ensure that these components don't give off too much heat, the greatest enemy of anything electronic.

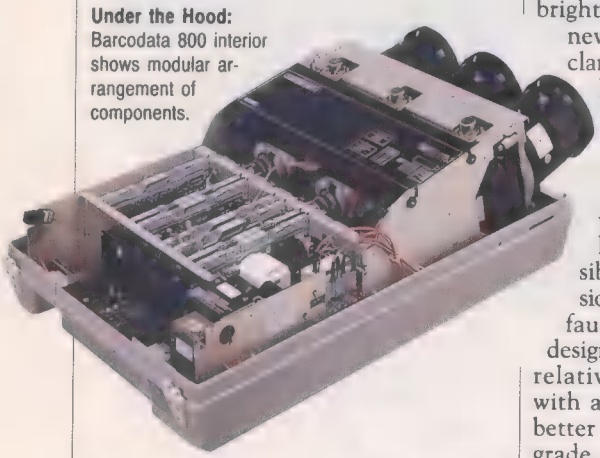
Then there's the issue of accuracy. Keeping an image sharp and stable when it's being projected from 10 to 30 feet away is a demanding job, because even slight imperfections are unflatteringly magnified. Unless these issues can somehow be addressed, a bigger picture just isn't worth the effort.

THE HOT SPOT

For the most part, projection TV designers have solved these problems. The first task was to increase the brightness, for a more realistic picture and a wider viewing angle. The first projection sets to find favor in the American market, like the mid-'70s Kloss Novabeam, usually provided less than 20 footlamberts of usable luminance. These sets demanded to be watched straight on in a completely darkened room. Today's projection sets increase this performance tenfold, far outstripping even their direct-view counterparts.

Achieving these brightness levels is an admirable feat, but unless done efficiently, it can create its own unique problems. CRT projection sets depend on pinpoint registration of the red, green and blue elements, so that the three colors converge perfectly at the screen.

Under the Hood: Barcodata 800 interior shows modular arrangement of components.



Since the lenses of the tubes depend heavily on high-tech plastics, it's easy to see how excessive heat from overdriven CRTs would distort images. Carefully calibrated components can warp and move out of alignment under these conditions, necessitating frequent user adjustments and sometimes even repair.

The solution is optical coupling, which uses a transparent, viscous fluid inserted between the heat-producing electron gun and the lens. This dissipates the heat before it can harm delicate components. In addition to cooling the lens, optical coupling also keeps the picture in sharper focus, acting as an extension of the lens itself. Virtually all modern projection sets now use this technique.

Some manufacturers have further refined this concept by building a liquid chamber away from the lens. This provides the same cooling benefits, while helping to prevent the fluid from discoloring over time. Others opt for more exotic cooling methods, like CRTs treated with rare-earth materials. Whatever the method, the result is the same: the benefits of hot, bright tubes without the degenerating effects of excess heat.

Ironically, another solution to the brightness problem caused an entirely new set of concerns with respect to clarity. Along with running the CRTs hotter, manufacturers learned to glean more brightness from projection sets by employing special lenses. Commonly called short focal-length lenses, these optics were designed to throw maximum light over as wide an angle as possible. Unfortunately, a wide-dispersion lens isn't the best choice for a faultlessly sharp image, because it's designed to move light in a broad, but relatively unfocused pattern. A lens with a longer focal length would be a better choice, but using one would degrade overall brightness, especially in the corners of the picture.

Rather than compromise with an either/or choice, the new breed of projectors uses a series of lens elements grouped together in complements. These complements, especially in a data-grade projection lens, might include nine or more elements. They can be glass or high-grade resin plastic; many lenses use a combination of the two.

Aspherical (concave) lens elements are usually closest to the CRT and are often coupled to it, spreading a wide path of light. Before the image leaves the projector, it runs through spherical (convex) elements which provide tight focus. The aspherical lens elements are typically plastic, while the spherical elements are usually coated glass, much like a good camera lens. The result is the best of both worlds—plenty of overall illumination with good focus and clarity.

CHOOSING A PROJECTOR

More so than any other piece of video equipment, a front projector works with its surroundings. The way the unit is set up is as critical to creating a convincing experience as the gear itself. Factors such as projection distance, viewing angle, ambient lighting and even the makeup of the screen are all equally important in bringing about the cinematic illusion. Moreover, there are several levels of performance and price available from the many models now on the market (see "More Models, Better Pictures").

Budget-level projection units have come so far that it almost seems a shame to label them as such. The difference between these models and their pricier siblings is usually a matter of light output and lens resolution. However, many living rooms don't need the additional power the high-end units offer. For example, if you plan on a smaller projected image (that is, if you can call a five- to six-foot diagonal image small), you can easily get by with a unit that employs smaller CRTs.

These CRTs, which are often coupled to video-grade lenses, are typically five to six inches in diameter and will do a fine job with most video source material, particularly for shorter projection distances. The additional clarity provided by the more elaborate data-grade lenses becomes more necessary as you move to screen sizes eight feet and up.

Also keep in mind that many projection units, especially in the budget

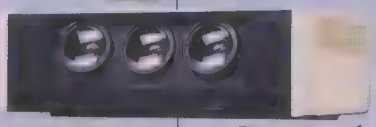
More Models, Better Pictures

Once considered a fringe market, projection video has been growing fast enough to entice several new companies to play the game. They join a community of projection veterans in raising the technology to new levels of performance and value.

For example, Zenith offers the $3,995 PV890X, capable of projecting five- to 10-foot images. The company follows a total, rather than modular, approach by including in the unit a 178-channel MTS-stereo tuner capable of picture-in-picture display. Other goodies include a learning remote and a World System Teletext decoder, so you can access continually updated news, sports and business information. Zenith achieves impressive price/performance ratios in its projectors—at an informal poll *Video Magazine* conducted during the projector shootout at last year's Infocomm show, industry professionals picked a $3,000 Zenith Pro841X as the best value.

Pulsar has been at the forefront of affordable projection TV, and the $4,500 Prodigy Eagle is its latest model. Featuring hybrid optics and a 10-watt audio system, the Eagle is unusually flexible. Short-focus lenses allow it to be closer to the screen than is typical, and the unit accepts up to seven video sources, including S-video.

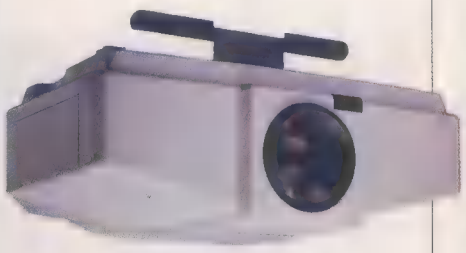
Further up the scale are consumer versions of professional products. The $6,000 Sony VPH-1000Q is a good example—it's essentially one of Sony's VPH professional projectors without the RGB input. The VPH-1000Q will accept NTSC, PAL and SECAM signals, and offers a reverse scan mode for use as a rear-screen projector. Mitsubishi's $7,200 VS-1202 also comes with a professional pedigree, as a quick look at its BNC connection panel will confirm. The unit features seven-inch CRTs with all-glass lenses and an RGB input terminal for computer graphic applications.



User-Friendly: Zenith's PV890X includes features not usually found in front projectors.

On a more home entertainment-ish note, Harman offers three units in its Series II line. The 3ML, 6ML and 8ML ($5,995, $7,995 and $9,995, respectively) differ from each other by varying degrees of brightness and from competitors by an automated convergence routine

continued on page 92



Lens Is More: Mitsubishi's VS-1000 is the only CRT-based projector to rely on one lens—not three.

range, lack an integral TV tuner. Obviously, you can use the tuner from your cable box, VCR or satellite receiver, or you can purchase one of the optional cable-ready tuners that most projector manufacturers offer. A few projectors, like those from Zenith and Pulsar's Prodigy series, include a tuner.

Midpriced projectors show more of the fruits of recent technological advances. The light output is generally greater, and the tubes usually larger—seven to eight inches in diameter. Glass/plastic hybrid lenses are *de rigeur* in these models. They also tend to be easier to adjust, which is much more important than with direct-view monitors.

One of the key factors in coaxing top performance out of a video projector is

continued on page 88

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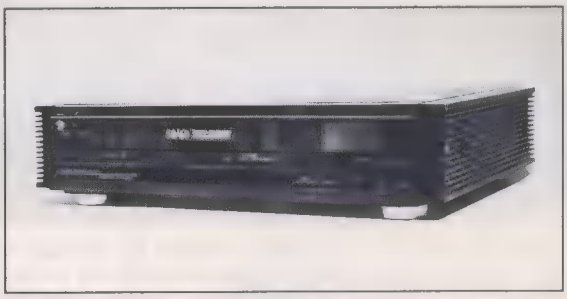

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DATELINE LAS VEGAS

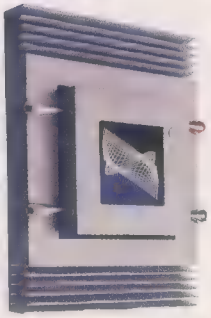
BY BRENT BUTTERWORTH
AND STAN PINKWAS

VIDEO ROULETTE

CES gets the ball rolling with hot new video and home theater products.

For video enthusiasts, it's always a safe bet that the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas will have plenty of new technology in store. Even the sluggish economy couldn't stem the tide of innovative video products, powerful home theater sound systems and gadgets from stylish to silly. Here's a sneak peek at a few of the show's most interesting new products. For inside info on the show, see this month's "Late News," and watch for more new products in next month's issue.

Fit to Be Framed: ▶ LCD video connoisseurs can check out Sharp's 8.6-inch flat display, available in a limited edition with wall-mounting brackets and a choice among several elaborate frames created by noted designers. The monitor delivers a bright, superior image for a museum-ready price of $4,500.



Progressive Scanner: RCA's ProScan 80 Series 60-inch rear projector uses a new improved-definition TV process to create a progressively scanned picture with what the company calls filmlike quality. Soon to be introduced, it will be packed with a multitude of other enhancements, including Dolby Pro-Logic surround sound, an Invar shadow mask, an anti-static tube and an onscreen graphic equalizer.

◀ **Function Finder:** With Panasonic's PV-42 VHS-C camcorder, you can find the right control without looking. Touch a frequently used button, and its symbol appears in the viewfinder. A firmer touch activates the control.

Flip-Up Fun: ▼ Laptop VHS TVCRs have been available for years, but Goldstar's GLV-B1000 is the first with a TV tuner. It weighs only 6.5 pounds, and features a four-inch LCD screen. The two-head mono machine runs on a rechargeable battery, AC or 12-volt DC.

Pencil Pusher: ▶ It looks like a giant writing utensil, but Bang & Olufsen's Beolab 8000 audio/video speaker pumps out room-filling sound. The 53-inch-high speaker features an internal amplifier and dual woofers, each with an extra magnet for higher output. A complex baffle system in the top enhances bass response.

Taking the Long View: Canon is adding an ultra-long telephoto lens to its pioneering L1 interchangeable-lens camcorder. The CL 250mm Reflex lens is a fixed lens equivalent in magnification to a 1,350mm telephoto lens for 35mm cameras. Short-barreled and relatively light, thanks to a catadioptric design, it includes a quartet of built-in neutral density filters and the ability to focus on objects as close as a yard away. ▶

Onkyo's First Laserdisc Player: With a reputation for high-quality audio products to uphold, Onkyo put all of its digital sound expertise into its first laserdisc player, the DX-V801. Its 20-bit digital-to-analog converter offers 8x oversampling and very low distortion. The result: a rated signal-to-noise ratio of 107 decibels. The new player borrows its sturdy, audiophile-quality construction from the rest of the company's line. Seven repeat modes, programmable play and random play offer maximum flexibility in viewing options.

VIDEO SHOWCASE

A GUIDE TO NEW VIDEO & SATELLITE PRODUCTS

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HOWCASE #4

BY BRENT BUTTERWORTH
AND STAN PINKWAS

VIDEO ROULETTE

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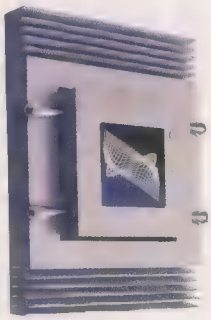

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GRAND PRIZE

Up to $5,000 toward the purchase of home video and audio equipment—the home theater system of your dreams! Choose any components and brands you wish. Build an entire system from scratch, add surround sound and a laserdisc player to your existing system, or spend it all on a big-screen video projector—it's up to you.

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Up to $2,000 toward the purchase of a camcorder and related equipment. Again, components and brands are your choice.

1991 Grand Prize: Steve and Velma Ballot's *Our Wedding Invitation.*

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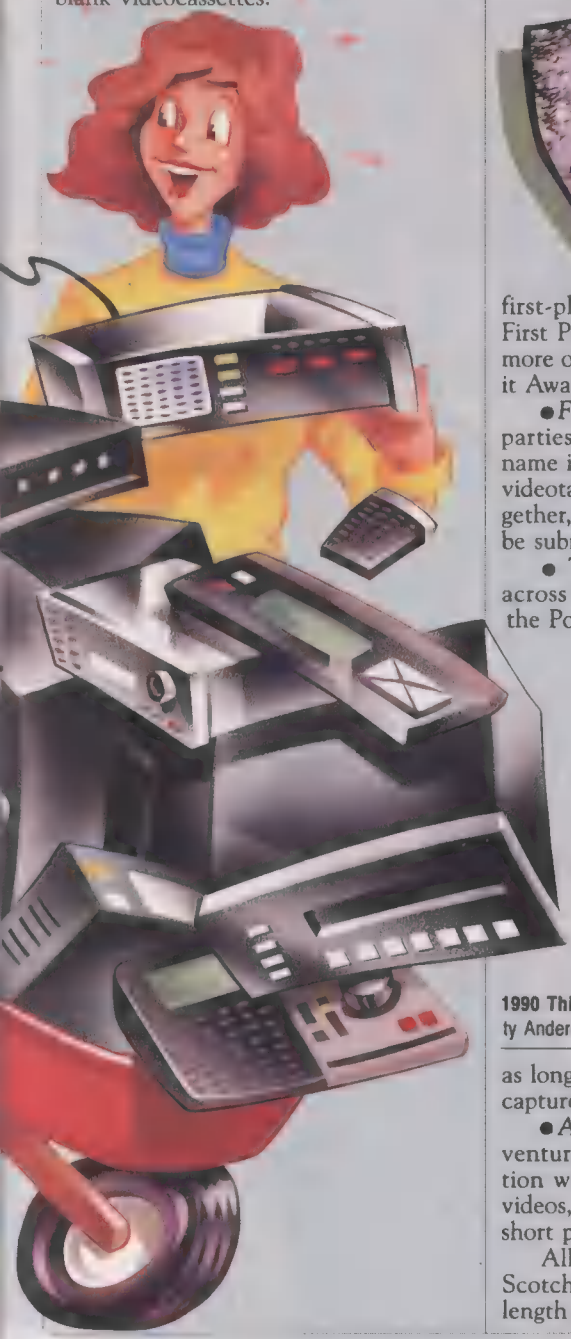


HOW TO ENTER

This year, we're awarding prizes in each of three home video categories. The best tape in the opinion of our judges will receive our Grand Prize. The other two

1990 Second Prize: Tony and Susan LeHoven's *The Queen and I.*

first-place winners will each receive a First Prize. In addition, we'll select five more outstanding tapes for Special Merit Awards. The categories are:

- *Family Event:* Weddings, birthday parties, anniversaries, barbecues—you name it. We're looking for fun, creative videotapes of any type of family get-together, excluding vacations, which may be submitted for the travel category.
- *Travel:* Whether it's a hiking trip across the Himalayas or a weekend in the Poconos, any travel video will do—

1990 Third Prize: Two-time winners Leigh and Betty Anderson's travelogue *Turkey.*

as long as it's well-shot, well-edited and captures the feel of the locale.

- *Art:* This is your chance to be adventurous. Try anything your imagination will allow, such as amateur music videos, short documentaries, comedy or short plays.

All entries must be submitted on a Scotch brand videocassette. Maximum length is 10 minutes. Specify which category you wish to enter. You may enter one tape in each category, but you may not enter the same tape in more than one category. Entries will be accepted on VHS, VHS-C, S-VHS, S-VHS-C, Beta, 8mm or Hi8, and must be postmarked no later than June 30, 1992. For complete rules, see page 70.

Entries will be judged by the editors of *Video Magazine*, on the basis of creativity and production skill. While you can use any gear you wish to produce your tape, be aware that we're not expecting slick, professional productions like those seen on TV. We're just looking for outstanding examples of amateur videography. Don't worry if your gear doesn't have the latest bells and whistles. In our book, a skillfully edited tape beats out gratuitous special-effects extravaganzas any day. And if your tape

1991 Special Merit Award: Jeff Sindiong's hilarious parody, *This Old Haunted House.*

can make us share a laugh, a feeling or the power of your imagination, you may have a winner.

For more tips on how to win our contest, watch for our next issue. In it, we'll profile our past winners and the equipment and techniques they used to create their videos. And for those who are just getting started in home video, we'll show how you can use gear you probably already own to produce videos that won't bore your friends—and that might even win our contest!

Entries must be postmarked by June 30, 1992, and must be sent to:

Video/Scotch Contest
Video Magazine
460 West 34 Street
New York, NY 10001 ■

ILLUSTRATION: DAVE JOLY; STILLS: MITSUBISHI CP10U VIDEO PRINTER

C·U·S·T·O·M INSTALLATION OF THE MONTH

BY STAN PINKWAS

ATTIC BIJOU

Hidden speakers & a disappearing screen add flair to a sleek retreat.

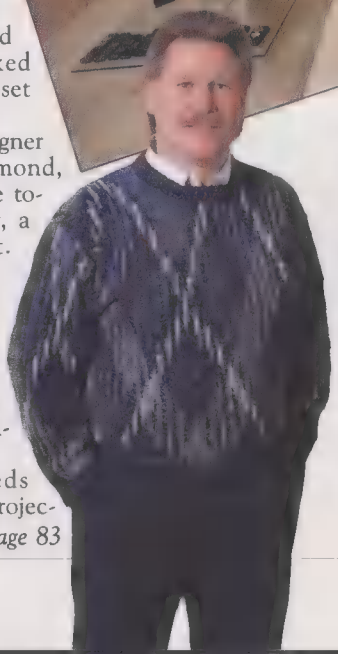
Every home theater has the potential to be unique. For one stylish installation in the Seattle, Washington, suburb of Bellevue, this condition was reached with the help of a sophisticated design that transformed an attic into a lavish viewing room that could, at a single command, turn into a relaxing family room.

The keys were a retractable screen and a set of eight nearly invisible surround-sound speakers. The speakers are hard to see because they're mounted flush within the walls of the theater, as are all the other components, in one manner or another. The 120-inch Stewart screen rests inside a recessed wall, in front of two large, signed lithographs, which become visible when the screen is raised. The audio and video components are stacked within a tall, glass-doored closet to the side of the screen.

Mark Casebeer, system designer for the Music Room of Redmond, Washington, created the space together with the homeowner, a computer software specialist. Casebeer, who is also a member of the Custom Electronic Design and Installation Association (see box on page 83), led a design team for the $60,000 project that included engineer Steve Segall and technician Scott Moser.

Video for the system feeds through a JBL Model 6 front projec-

continued on page 83

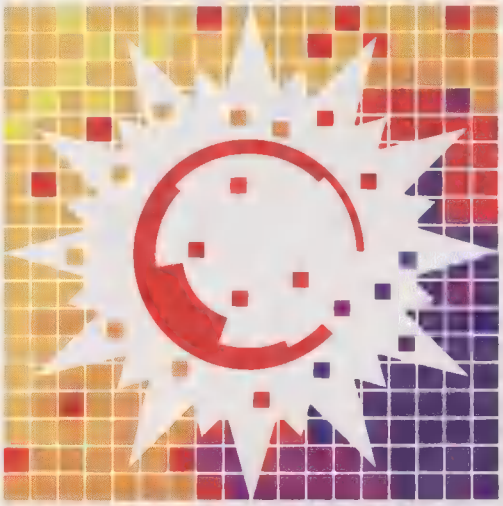


Feeling Flush: Surround-sound speakers, mounted flush within the walls (top) by system designer Mark Casebeer (left), become visible (far left) only when the grille panels are removed for servicing. When the retractable screen is not being used, two lithographs decorate the front wall (above).

JOHN GUSSMAN/MEDINA, WASHINGTON

It's a combination of Disney World, Epcot Center, the World's Fair, Hollywood, Woodstock, Broadway, the Smithsonian and the Land of Oz.

In short, there's something for everybody. Because everybody's invited this year. There's something special for Audio people. Video people. Computer people. All electronic people. Like a car stereo Sound-Off that features the hottest IASCA champions. A continuous running Laser Show that will throw a whole new light on electronics. A Music Fest that will create new sensations for your ears. A Family Sweepstakes where you can win up to $10,000 in electronic prizes.



You'll meet celebrities. There will be authorities in the industry. Free seminars to answer all your "how to" questions. As well as every electronic innovation from the farthest stretches of our imaginations. Just call us at 1-800-388-6901 to qualify for free tickets. And we'll send you our special Chicago Summer Travel Kit complete with tickets, maps, even tips on where to get the best Chicago-style pizza. So *be* there. Just follow the yellow brick road.

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DIAL V

Movies by telephone? Fiber optics may soon change the way we watch TV.

FOR VIDEO

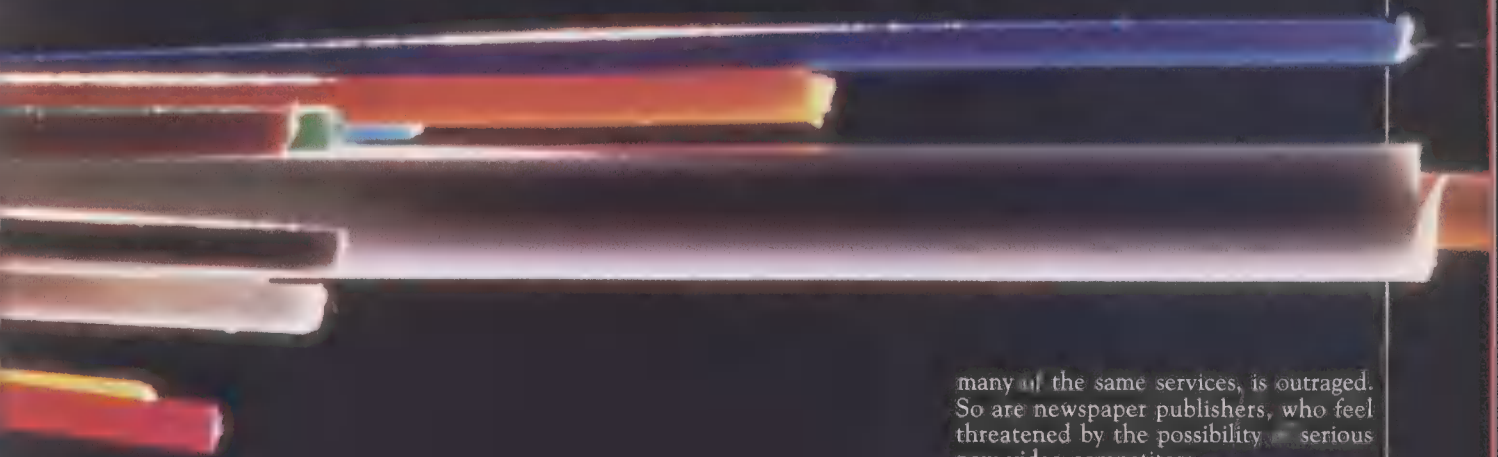
BY FRANK BEACHAM

Consider the video dial tone, an elegant idea – TV through telephone lines – summed up in a simple phrase. The would-be viewer picks up a telephone, taps a few buttons on a wireless keypad and watches as a high-definition wall display becomes an instant window into hundreds of video and audio programs. We've all seen something futuristic like this in science-fiction films. But by the end of this decade, it may actually become part of our lives and homes.

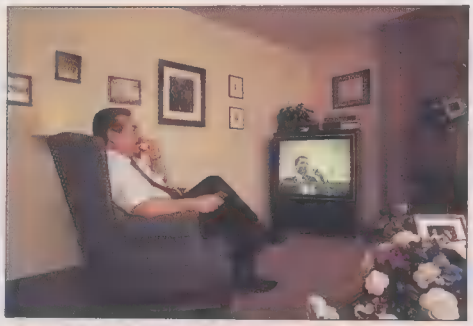
Recent federal government decisions are bringing us ever closer to a future in which household phones may serve as the entry ramp to a superhighway of video and information services. A kind of viewing that some experts predict will make passive, familiar TV watching as obsolete as black-and-white sets. A new kind of "TV-by-choice" will emerge, changing the way we watch television and shaking up traditional communication businesses, from broadcast networks and TV program syndicators to home video retailers.

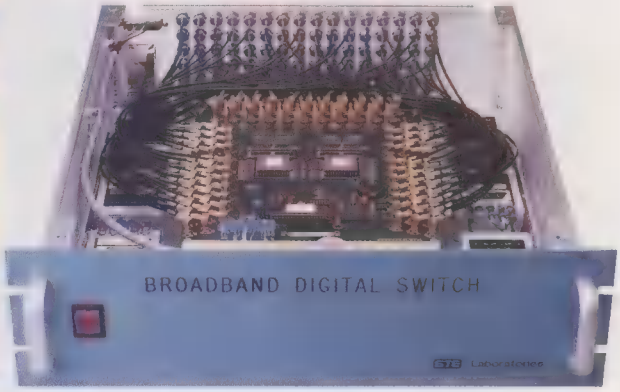
While the nation's phone companies relish the creation of this so-called video dial tone as an idea whose time has come, the cable television industry, which enjoys a virtual monopoly on many of the same services, is outraged. So are newspaper publishers, who feel threatened by the possibility of serious new video competitors.

Nevertheless, video transmission technology is moving at a lightning pace. And while the video dial tone may well lead to innovative or improved video services, the idea of sending video programs through the phone system is so new and untested it raises a cloud of unanswered questions. To help answer some of these questions, the Federal Communications Commission recently voted – unanimously – to allow phone companies to deliver video signals.



A Touch of Glass: Fiber-optic cable (main photo) may soon carry video programs to homes, replacing standard twisted-pair copper wire (far right) and as an alternative to coaxial cable (center right).





Look Who's Talking: Fiber optics and new system components, like GTE's chip-based digital switch (far right), are already making it possible for some California residents (right) to hold high-quality home videophone conversations.

Moreover, FCC Chairman Alfred Sikes has praised the idea of a video dial tone in public appearances. The moves set off a flurry of new activity among competing interests that have long been skirmishing over the issue.

But while lobbyists joust, consumers can get a sense of what video phone systems will be like by looking at the results of an elaborate experiment under way in Cerritos, California. Two years ago, GTE Telephone Operations began providing the 95,000 people who live in this Los Angeles suburb with advanced video, voice and data services in a technology and marketing test that will run through the next three years.

One unique aspect of the Cerritos project is that the community has been wired with a variety of transmission networks, including fiber optics, coaxial cable and twisted-pair copper wire (the medium used to carry ordinary telephone service). The project is regularly updated so GTE can experiment with new technologies as they emerge. As a result, some Cerritos customers on the 2,500-mile fiber-optic network are already receiving video-on-demand.

As the name implies, video-on-demand lets users choose from among a wide variety of programs (mostly recent movies) when they want them, 24 hours a day. Once a selection is showing, a subscriber can control viewing with such VCR-like functions as fast forward and reverse. (Systems that give remote users VCR control functions are also in place in a few research institutions, like the Museum of Television and Radio in New York City. Here, researchers seated in TV-equipped video carrels can control the pace, speed and characteristics of any TV program they may be watching, even though the signal is coming from a VCR in another part of the museum.)

Some Cerritos customers also have a video phone service that lets them use standard camcorders and TV sets to send and receive full-motion video and audio signals. And GTE recently installed the prototype for a new kind of switching system. Developed at company labs in Waltham, Massachusetts, the switch consists of a compact box housing two computer chips that together can receive 64 incoming video signals and switch them to any or all of 32 separate homes or other destinations.

The new switching technology helped GTE launch a test in which six Cerritos teachers were given the ability to use video-on-demand services in their

continued on page 83

Giving Hell To Bell

If phone companies transmit video programs over fiber-optic cables, will viewers benefit? For most people the jury's still out, awaiting the results of further tests like the Cerritos project. But other segments of the video industry are lining up in opposition to the Bell companies, and not waiting to hold their fire. Here's why:

- *Cable Broadcasters.* Fear new competition will threaten their own growing subscriber lists—and charge that phone companies will use their clout to ride roughshod over regulators and consumers, as shown by a newspaper ad (detail below) partly sponsored by cablecasters.
- *The Networks.* With traditional ratings slipping, new competition could deal a death blow to ABC, CBS or NBC. The networks say they're already harmed by federal rules limiting their ownership of cable channels and companies that produce the programs they broadcast.
- *Video Stores.* As rental dealers see it, the more ways people have to order movies at home, the less need they'll have to visit rental stores. Premium cable channels, pay-per-view movie plans and possible direct-broadcast satellites, like SkyPix, are already changing rental habits.
- *Newspapers.* Phone companies will also be able to transmit classified advertising to TV sets. News publishers foresee such video classifieds draining ads, and revenue, from their own pages.

—Stan Pinkwas

TAPES & DISCS

NEW RELEASES

FEATURE FILMS

Boyz N the Hood

1991. Cuba Gooding Jr., Ice Cube, Larry Fishburne; wr./dir. John Singleton. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (R) 112 min. $94.98. LD $34.95. Criterion LD (letterboxed, third side CAV) $89.95. Columbia TriStar.

The news from the 'hood is not good. Toddlers stroll unattended in the street while their mothers think only of the next fix. Automatic weapons fire is a common distraction from homework, as is the sound of nearby police helicopters. Everyone seems to have a gun, and most find occasion to use it. Death itself is pretty much taken for granted.

The neighborhood in question is in South Central Los Angeles, where high school senior Tre (Cuba Gooding Jr.) is trying to stay alive long enough to reach manhood. Several of his childhood friends, including the bitter Doughboy (Ice Cube), have police records. Ricky (Morris Chestnut), Doughboy's half-brother and Tre's best friend, hopes for a football scholarship; he already has a son of his own. Even if Tre's strong father (Larry Fishburne) can keep him moving in the right direction, there's always a chance that the next time gang members point their shotgun out a car window, it won't be in fun.

Boyz N the Hood, from 23-year-old director John Singleton, is a slice of life, and death, in the ghetto. Singleton's inexperience shows plainly in small mistakes (the opening title states that one in every 21 young black American males will be killed "in their lifetime"); it's more painful in what is supposed to be a big scene, a murder that is set up so ham-handedly, with so many cliches of writing and direction, it made me cringe. The picture is more a mosaic than a coherent narrative, and the events are frequently more interesting than the characters.

Boyz Will Be Boyz: Morris Chestnut, Cuba Gooding Jr. and Ice Cube tough it out *N the Hood.*

Where *Boyz* scores is in brief moments and details, from the children's drawings of street violence that adorn the classroom walls to the black cop so full of self-loathing, he terrorizes other blacks to deny his own skin. Singleton was fortunate to obtain the services of Fishburne, an imposing actor who makes his dialog sound like Shakespeare. Ice Cube makes his relatively small part memorable. And Singleton atones for that botched scene with a climactic revenge killing which leaves no doubt that the murder of a youth with no "future" is as awful—and stupid—as any other.

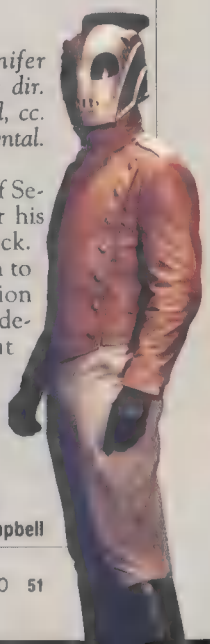
Boyz N the Hood is intended less as a great movie than as news that isn't being reported elsewhere. On that count it often scores impressively.

—Sol Louis Siegel

The Rocketeer

1991. Bill Campbell, Jennifer Connelly, Timothy Dalton; dir. Joe Johnston. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG) 109 min. priced for rental. Disney.

"I *like* it," exclaims Cliff Secord (Bill Campbell) after his first flight with a rocket pack. That describes my reaction to *The Rocketeer*, a live-action art deco comic book that delivers the goods without banging us over the head. It has a pleasing and consistent visual style, neatly staged action sequences, terrific villains and plenty of sight gags.



Bill Campbell

The setting is 1938 Los Angeles, where race pilot Secord's plane gets wrecked during a chase between the FBI and gangsters. The gangsters leave behind the stolen rocket pack, which Secord plans to return after he's used it to earn back his losses. This is a mistake: He's now a target not only for the Feds and the mob, but for the rocket pack's real inventor and the Nazis as well. And the bad guys are threatening his sweetheart Jenny (Jennifer Connelly) to get to him.

That's all you need to know. Director Joe Johnston keeps things going at a smooth rather than slam-bang pace. The writers have gleefully raided the history of the period for the in-jokes that lace the picture. Supporting players like Timothy Dalton (the chief baddie), Alan Arkin, Paul Sorvino and Terry O'Quinn go to town with bravura roles, and Connelly's eye-popping beauty is a major asset in itself.

Campbell is rather ordinary by comparison, but I have no problem with that. I do have problems with the pan-and-scan, though. Many of those sight gags were designed for the wide screen—and a Rocketeer, after all, needs his space to fly in. **—SLS**

Top Fun: Charlie Sheen, Valeria Golino, Lloyd Bridges and Cary Elwes fly high in *Hot Shots!*

Barton Fink

1991. John Turturro, John Goodman; wr./dir. Joel and Ethan Coen. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (R) 116 min. $94.98. FoxVideo.

"*What* don't I understand?" asks Barton Fink, watching his life fall apart. The sad truth is the befuddled writer doesn't understand anything, which provides countless comic possibilities for director-writer Joel and co-writer Ethan Coen—too many possibilities. A half-baked stew of suspense and surrealistic wit, *Barton Fink* flaunts its intelligence and audacity without bothering to put the pieces together. Rarely is a movie so enticing and so irritating at the same time.

In a Muddle: "Serious" writer *Barton Fink* (John Turturro) ponders life—and what's in the box.

Hollywood, *circa* 1941: Against his better judgment, successful Broadway playwright Barton Fink (John Turturro) has allowed himself to be seduced by movie studio moolah. Taking up residence at the creepy Hotel Earle, he begins work on a Wallace Beery wrestling film, only to succumb to writer's block. Though gregarious neighbor Charlie Meadows (John Goodman) provides encouragement, Fink can't get started. The desperate search for inspiration leads to drunken novelist Bill Mayhew (John Mahoney) and his companion Audrey (Judy Davis). Then all hell breaks loose.

For the first hour, *Barton Fink* is a crafty spoof of movieland absurdities, highlighted by inspired performances, including Michael Lerner as a cheerfully overbearing studio head. When the Coens throw caution to the winds, the symbols fly fast and furious, the plot twists get progressively more outlandish and the movie falls apart. Charlie goes on an unexpected rampage; while Fink finally finishes the script, he entirely misses the point of the assignment. Although *Barton Fink* looks great, and raises interesting, if standard, questions about illusion and reality, it's an empty exercise by two guys much too impressed with themselves. **—Jon Young**

EDITOR'S CHOICE

by

kenneth korman

Hot Shots!

1991. Charlie Sheen, Lloyd Bridges; dir. Jim Abrahams. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (PG-13) 83 min. $94.98. FoxVideo.

Any normal person knows you can't parody something as silly as *Top Gun*, but that didn't stop Jim Abrahams. The *Naked Gun* alumnus puts his experience to good use as director and co-writer of *Hot Shots!*, a sly spoof of nouveau militarism. This manic melange of sight gags and bad jokes boasts amusingly wooden characters, a laughably obvious story and agreeably dumb dialog. Just like the real thing, in fact.

Former Navy flyer Topper Harley (Charlie Sheen) is a refugee from an unhappy past. Living on a reservation under an Indian name that means "fluffy bunny feet," he seems a poor choice to lead a sensitive Middle East bombing mission. Naturally, that's what he agrees to do, along the way encountering sexy psychiatrist Ramada Thompson (Valeria Golino), archrival Kent Gregory (Cary Elwes) and shell-shocked Admiral Benson (Lloyd Bridges). Anybody who can't predict the plot must be from Mars.

Sheen makes a great deadpan lead, while Golino somehow keeps a straight face in the goofiest seduction scene ever. Although the pacing of *Hot Shots!* wavers, everybody has a fine time, tossing in jabs at *The Fabulous Baker Boys*, *Rocky* and *Gone With the Wind* for good measure. Anyway, it's impossible to resist a movie with a character named Dead Meat—who's cheerfully oblivious to his impending fate, of course.

—JY

The Reflecting Skin

1991. Viggo Mortensen, Lindsay Duncan; wr./dir. Philip Ridley. Hi-fi stereo. (NR) 98 min. $89.98. LIVE.

It's an understatement to say that *The Reflecting Skin* is not a film for everyone. But for fans of the *outre*, this eerie, unsettling film by writer-director Philip Ridley (who also wrote last year's *The Krays*) is highly recommended.

Like *The Turn of the Screw* crossed with *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Reflecting Skin* tracks an eight-year-old Kansas boy's corruption into evil as an innocent reaction to behavior and events he doesn't understand. When his father reads to him from a vampire story, young Seth Dove (Jeremy Cooper) surmises that the reclusive young widow next door (Lindsay Duncan) is such a monster. His brother Cameron (Viggo Mortensen) returns home from Pacific duty in World War II changed by the horrors he has seen. When Cameron begins an affair with the widow, Seth fears she is planning to take his life.

Influenced by both David Lynch and Peter Greenaway, Ridley uses bright natural colors both to contrast and intensify the sense of growing evil. Nick Bicat's hypnotic score is extremely effective at modulating the ominous mood. Blessedly free of the campy humor that has marred Lynch's recent work, *The Reflecting Skin* contains some elements that seem merely bizarre for their own sake. But this compelling, disturbing film is one you won't soon forget.

—M. Faust

Young Man's Fancy: Evan Hall fears his neighbor is a vampire in *The Reflecting Skin.*

LASERDISCS

Terminator 2: Judgment Day

1991. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton, Robert Patrick, dir. James Cameron. Digital surround, cc. (R) 139 min. CAV boxed set: letterboxed, 9 sides, $89.95; CLV edition: letterboxed or pan-and-scan, 3 sides, $29.95. Carolco/Pioneer.

What more can you say about 1991's biggest grossing, most expensive and

Middle age isn't easy on rock musicians. Some never reach it, burning out in the proverbial blaze of glory, while the rest merely fade away, repeating themselves in diminishing echoes. A precious few, such as Neil Young and Paul Simon, manage to maintain artistic credibility as well as commercial appeal. Simon's **Concert in the Park** and Young's **Weld** (both Warner Reprise; laserdisc $34.98, VHS $29.98), two live sets recorded in mid-'91, show these old-timers in near-peak condition, though they've taken vastly different roads to rekindle their careers.

Neil Young

Simon went international in recent times, first finding inspiration in South African music for his 1986 album *Graceland*, then venturing to Brazil for 1990's *The Rhythm of the Saints*. His *Concert in the Park* features 17 musicians from three continents in an exuberant (and free) performance on Central Park's Great Lawn. Deft camera work and editing capture the feel of the event, witnessed live by a crowd of more than 750,000. But few experienced it the way we now can at home, especially through the remarkable picture and sound of the laserdisc edition. It far surpasses Simon's 1987 *Graceland: The African Concert*.

Neil Young went back to his rock 'n' roll roots over the past few years with Crazy Horse, his occasional three-piece band of more than 20 years. *Weld* reconstructs a 105-minute concert from the *Ragged Glory* tour by collecting the best single-song performances from a number of shows. Where Simon's current sound is delicate and detailed, Young's pounds like a sledgehammer. But what it lacks in subtlety it rectifies with excitement. And like *Concert in the Park*, *Weld* benefits from the tremendous quality-control with which Warner Reprise produces its music laserdiscs. Current audio and video technologies have changed projects like these from cheap tour souvenirs to spectacular private concerts. ■

most talked-about movie? Plenty, if you own a laserdisc player. Because the entertainment value of the *Terminator 2* CAV boxed set easily transcends that of the film's theatrical release. In terms of image quality, this disc is simply the best

Stupendous Sequel: Watching Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* on laserdisc could make viewers bid "hasta la vista" to the videotape version.

I've ever seen. Many scenes, especially the skinless terminator emerging from the flames in the title sequence, just don't look like video. They look like *film*. (The CLV edition seems ever-so-slightly flatter—unless you have a top-notch monitor, you probably won't notice the difference.)

I've often considered CAVs a waste of money, but if your disc player doesn't have digital effects, this one's a must-buy. It took me nearly four hours to watch it the first time, because I couldn't resist stepping through each special-effects scene frame by frame. T2 is best seen on laserdisc because you can enjoy its details—the good terminator's computer-readout vision, the evil terminator's flawlessly smooth metamorphosis—as you never could in the theater or on the pan-and-scan VHS tape.

You can even spot the film's few glitches. (Check out side 5, frame 5,341 for a conspicuous set of strings attached to the good terminator.) The pulldown is perfect—I didn't find any of the flickering still frames that plague many CAVs. The boxed set includes an informative 31-minute documentary featuring interviews with the director, stars and special-effects artists.

I've spent countless hours watching laserdiscs, but never before have I so enjoyed just looking at one. And in addition to creating a technical *tour de force*, Cameron threw in a terrific cast, an inspired script and a captivating story.

—Brent Butterworth

The Golden Age of Looney Tunes: 70 Complete Uncut Cartoons

1931-48. B&W/color. Anim. Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, Porky Pig; various dirs. Digital mono. (NR) 531 min. CLV 10 sides. $99.98. MGM/UA.

Elmer Fudd and that "scwewy wabbit" are falling off a cliff. They've almost hit bottom when Bugs Bunny pulls out a bottle of "Hare Tonic." He drinks it, stopping his descent in midair. The bottle's label makes clear why: "Guaranteed to stop falling hares."

Outrageous puns, zany action and crazy characters—yes, it's Looney Tunes time. If you don't know Bugs and Daffy and their patented brand of controlled chaos, take a peek at this five-disc collection of visually absurd and verbally rich masterpieces of anarchy.

Each disc is arranged by topic, starting with an early musical from 1931 when Warners was simply interested in keeping up with the Disneys (Bosko, the charmless lead, is Mickey Mouse with pointed ears). Watching the Warner style evolve is revelatory, as the directors experiment with parodies ("Corny Concerto" mocks *Fantasia*), heart-warmers ("Sniffles Takes a Trip") and fractured fairy tales ("Cinderella Meets Fella").

Although the discs could have included more early monochrome material (such as "Porky's Hare Hunt," featuring an embryonic Bugs Bunny known as Happy Rabbit) and better annotation, collectors should not pass them up. After all, where else can you find a duck and pig discussing phrenology? "Tell the future by the bumps on your head!" cries Daffy. "But I don't have any bumps!" stutters Porky. This being Warners, you know the rest. Or should. That's all, folks!

—Tom Soter

The Searchers

1956. John Wayne, Jeffrey Hunter, Ward Bond; dir. John Ford, Digital mono, letterboxed. (NR) 119 min. plus supplement. CLV 3 sides. $39.98. Warner.

Dances With Wolves

1990. Kevin Costner, Mary McDonnell, Graham Greene; dir. Kevin Costner. Digital stereo, letterboxed or pan-and-scan. (PG-13) 181 min. CLV 4 sides. $49.98. Orion/Image Entertainment.

If nothing else, the differences between these two films—both of which

Cheshire Grin: *Golden Age of Looney Tunes* chronicles almost 20 years of Warner Bros. zaniness.

deal with the disastrous consequences of the white man's contact with Native Americans—prove that it takes more than good intentions and top talent to make a great movie.

Kevin Costner set out with good intentions in telling *Dances With Wolves*' tale of two cultures' disastrous meeting. He benefitted from Dean Semler's ravishing cinematography, John Barry's elegiac score and a series of fine performances. But Michael Blake's screenplay relies too heavily on incidents and historical points that were better delineated in films like *Run of the Arrow* and *How the West Was Won*, not to mention the TV series *Hondo*. And Costner's self-indulgent direction and unconvincing performance deaden the movie.

If you can get past these problems, this laserdisc is a fine piece of work. The letterboxed edition beautifully preserves Semler's cinematography—although the color is less vibrant than that of the panned-and-scanned version—as well as Barry's music. There are 26 well-placed chapters, and the packaging is above average for anything short of a Criterion release.

John Ford didn't have any special good intentions when he made *The Searchers*, a tale of an eight-year quest by two men to recover a young girl kidnapped by Indians. What he did have was a great script and a perfect leading man (John Wayne) at its center. Not that the film is perfect—the middle lags severely—but so much of the rest is right, its problems don't seem too important.

This reissue has been mildly letterboxed to capture the film's original VistaVision dimensions, and its color was painstakingly restored to its original luster. It shows off every hue and shading unique to the Monument Valley locations, and is almost too good: The close-ups and interiors in the Indian village look fake when juxtaposed with the grit, dust and natural lighting of the exterior shots. The supplementary material, though, is a waste of time, consisting of promotional spots for the film from television's *Warner Bros. Presents*. They reveal little except a patronizing attitude toward the Navajo Indians.

—Bruce Eder

Howdy, Pardners: Director John Ford made John Wayne a star with *Stagecoach* in 1939, and the pair collaborated on several more westerns, including 1956's *The Searchers* (right).

Ready Steady Go!

1965-66. "Volume Three," "The Sounds of Motown," "Otis Redding Live." Dirs. Michael Lindsay-Hogg ("Three"), Rollo Gamble ("Motown"), Peter Croft ("Redding"). 25-57 min. CLV 1 side each. $24.95 each. Pioneer Artists.

This trio of *Ready Steady Go!* programs has finally made it to disc, several years after being released on cassette. *Volume Three* of this British rock-music television showcase from the mid-'60s is the weakest, made up of lip-synched performances by the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and others, of whom only Dusty Springfield ("Can I Get A Witness") makes any visual impression. John Lennon gives a rambunctious interview, and Mick Jagger fends off the caresses of his female fans while miming to "Off the Hook." More entertaining are the commercials, which include excruciatingly funny bits by British comedy legend Tony Hancock and a young Benny Hill.

By contrast, *The Sounds of Motown* is the finest Motown video available, featuring live performances by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, the Supremes, Stevie Wonder, Martha and the Vandellas and the Temptations. Even the Supremes, who were notoriously uneven on stage, perform well. And as a bonus, we get Dusty Springfield performing an exuberant "Wishin' and Hopin' " with Martha and the Vandellas.

Otis Redding Live! is another must-own, even though a portion of its 25 minutes is given to English soul-shouters Eric Burdon and Chris Farlowe. Redding's performance, backed by his touring band and encompassing his major hits, is powerful and persuasive, and the 25-year-old audio is surprisingly vivid. The black-and-white image, while a little faded, is sharper than the now-deleted Sony videocassette of this show.

—BE

For a Few Dollars More

1967. Clint Eastwood, Lee Van Cleef, Gian Maria Volonte; dir. Sergio Leone. Digital mono, letterboxed. 130 min. CAV third side. $39.95. MGM/UA.

Taken by itself and viewed out of context, *For a Few Dollars More* is a somewhat pedantic Clint Eastwood spaghetti western. But this typically violent story of two bounty hunters (Eastwood, Lee Van Cleef) combining forces to track down a gang of bank robbers is the pivot of Leone's late-'60s "Man With No Name" trilogy (*A Fistful of Dollars* began the series, and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* brought it to a close.) And viewed on this lovingly produced widescreen laserdisc, *For a Few Dollars More* becomes integral to understanding the Leone style and the development of both the genre and its star.

It's fascinating to see Leone expand his cinematic *agrements* beyond pure action and blood with this film. Even saddled with the most predictable plot and weakest structure of the *Dollars* trilogy, he refines the good/bad/ugly character trinity that mark his movies, with Van Cleef the good, Eastwood the semibad and Volonte the ugly. Leone's musical sidekick, Ennio Morricone, mixes his familiar twangy and ethereal soundtrack with the tinkly tune of a pocket watch that is the focal point of the film.

Leone's intimate, painterly compositions lose none of their impact on the small screen, and with the widescreen format, you can finally see what Eastwood and Van Cleef are shooting at. Although the print sometimes shows its scratchy age, this digitally transferred disc is colorful and sharp with intelligently placed side breaks.

—Stewart Wolpin

SPECIAL INTEREST

The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle

1991 comps. Anim. "Whistler's Moose" (Vol. 7), "Norman Moosewell" (Vol. 8). Hi-fi mono, cc. 52 min. ("Whistler"), 56 min. ("Moosewell"). $12.99 each. Buena Vista.

Touted tongue-in-cheekly as "the last great collection in the history of man," last year's video reissue of Rocky and Bullwinkle really *was* major cause for celebration.

Moosecapades: Boris Badenov and Natasha resume the hunt for a certain well-known herbivore.

Long before *Moonlighting* (1959, to be exact), Jay Ward's irreverent, pun-packed creations knocked down the "fourth wall" to engage in hilarious asides and debates. Before *The Simpsons*, theirs was the cartoon show that even childless adults adored. Drolly voiced by the likes of Edward Everett Horton and Hans Conried, the show never underestimated viewer intelligence or even worried if its best puns zoomed over young heads.

This benignly warped, multiple-leveled vision makes for genuine all-family entertainment. Preschoolers can delight in the skillfully skewed animation, adolescents can relate to the smart-alecky tone, and baby boomer parents can *finally* understand the jokes.

As with the six initial releases, these tapes offer a full R&B adventure interrupted by segments from Dudley Do-Right, Mr. Peabody and Sherman and others, sans commercials. "Whistler's Moose" features the "Statehood for Moosylvania" serial which ended the series' original run, but pales next to the "Normal Moosewell" edition. This college football parody, set at the infamous Wossamotta U., is a wonder of glorious wordplay and convoluted plot.

These 'toons aren't pushing toys and offer the highest laughs-per-minute in video. To paraphrase Boris Badenov, "Moose and squirrel, must buy!"

—Marianne Meyer

Best of MTV's 120 Minutes

1991. Various artists. Hi-fi stereo. 45 min. $19.98. Rhino.

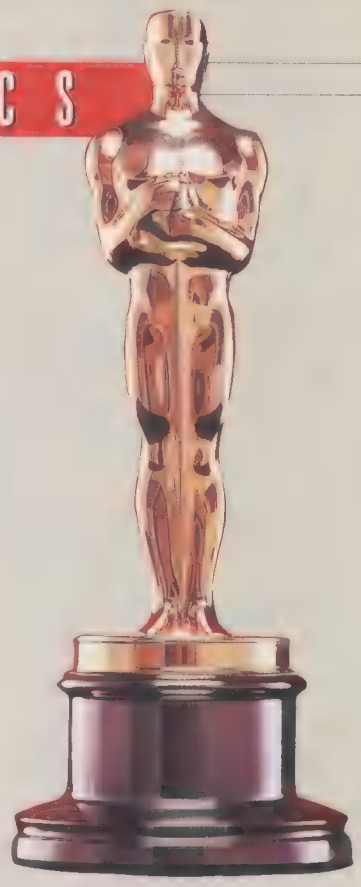
Some of the best stuff on MTV isn't even music video. This compilation opens with an Iggy Pop "Rock the Vote" public service announcement and closes with an editorial cartoon on acid rain. These innovative bits stimulate a desire for more of the bizarre promos and mini-films that dot the network's regular programming, and for less of the programming itself.

With few exceptions—They Might Be Giants' confidently weird "Ana Ng," Sonic Youth's postpunk "Laugh-In" version of "Cool Thing," Violent Femmes' Hitchcockian family drama "Gone Daddy Gone"—this 10-clip collection represents neither the boldest musicians nor most inventive videos from the alternative rock show that bears its name. The cheap trippiness of Stone Roses and other British poseurs or the bratty attack of Faith No More are reminders that missing the mainstream is sometimes justice served on those of limited appeal. And we all know that great music and good videos can be mutually exclusive. Camper Van Beethoven's "Eye of Fatima" is a ripping song; the clip is a snooze.

Nothing Compares: Sinead O'Connor's "Mandinka" is featured on the first compilation from MTV's weekly *120 Minutes* show.

This *Best Of* is more like an abbreviated (why *not* 120 minutes?) sampler of the series without commercials or an annoying host. You could do that yourself with a tape of last week's show and some creative zapping.

—MM



Oscar's Greatest Moments: 1971-1991

1992 comp. Pr./dir. Jeff Margolis. Hi-fi stereo. (NR) 110 min. $19.95. 8mm, LD price n.a. Columbia TriStar.

The fall and rise (and subsequent fall) of Jane Fonda's hair. An endless stream of jabs at Jack Nicholson. James Stewart poking fun at his st-st-stutter. Where else could you find such Hollywood trivia than at the Oscars?

Oscar's Greatest Moments: 1971-1991 brings together the obvious (David Niven's witticism on a streaker's "shortcomings," Sacheen Littlefeather's acceptance of Marlon Brando's award), the unwanted (Madonna's embarrassing rendition of a *Dick Tracy* song, Sheena Easton in an overblown "For Your Eyes Only" number), the sappy (Debby Boone crooning "You Light Up My Life" as children sign the lyrics—which turned out to be mumbo-jumbo—for deaf viewers) and the heartwarming (Charlie Chaplin's return to Hollywood after a 20-year self-imposed exile).

It's two hours of great fun for movie buffs and celebrity watchers alike. Apart from brief interludes with Academy president Karl Malden fawning over Oscar, the clips from the ceremonies—plus snippets from nominated films, actors and actresses—will send you running to the video store to pull together your own Academy Awards film-fest.

—April P. Bernard

DIRECTORY

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

Adventure
6 vols. Acclaimed PBS series whisks you around the globe to exotic places—Polynesia, the Yukon, the Himalayas—while pumping you full of adrenalin with daring exploits. Mono, cc. 60 min. each. VHS only, $24.95 each. Mystic Fire.

Amazing Stories: Book Four
1985-86. Sam Waterston (*Mirror, Mirror*), Max Gail (*Blue Man Down*), Sid Caesar (*Mr. Magic*); various dirs. Before he became a household name with *GoodFellas* and *Cape Fear*, Martin Scorsese lent his directing talents to one episode of the popular series, the tale of a horror-film director stalked by his onscreen monsters. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (NR) 71 min. VHS $79.95. LD (digital) $34.98. MCA/Universal.

An Angel at My Table
1990. Kerry Fox; dir. Jane Campion. Celebrated New Zealand filmmaker crafts biography of New Zealand writer, Janet Frame, in award-winning film-festival darling. Mono. (R) 157 min. VHS only, priced for rental. New Line.

Autobiography of a Princess
1975. Madhur Jaffrey, James Mason; dir. James Ivory. Celebrates 30th anniversary of the team of producer Ismail Merchant, director James Ivory and screenwriter Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (*A Room With a View, Maurice*): Indian princess and Brit reminisce about royal India. Hi-fi mono. (NR) 59 min. VHS only, $29.95. Connoisseur.

Fond Farewell: A soldier (John Gilbert) and his sweetheart (Renee Adoree) in an expressive scene from King Vidor's World War I epic, *The Big Parade*.

The Big Parade
1925. B&W. John Gilbert, Renee Adoree; dir. King Vidor. Silent film depiction of WWI was the crowning achievement for King Vidor (*The Crowd*) and one of the era's finest motion pictures. Digital mono. (NR) 126 min. LD $39.98. MGM/UA.

Blood in the Face
1991. True-life horrors: powerful closeup of the Ku Klux Klan, the American Nazi Party, the Aryan Nations and David Duke. Mono. (NR) 78 min. VHS only, $59.95. First Run Features.

The Fisher King
1991. Jeff Bridges, Robin Williams, Mercedes Ruehl; dir. Terry Gilliam. Homeless man enlists aid of down-and-out DJ in his search for the Holy Grail. Amanda Plummer is side-splitting as Williams' misfit love interest. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 137 min. VHS priced for rental. Columbia TriStar. LD (hi-fi surround, letterboxed, audio commentary from director Terry Gilliam, side 4 CAV) $99.95. Voyager/Criterion.

The French Lieutenant's Woman
1981. Meryl Streep, Jeremy Irons; dir. Karel Reisz. John Fowles novel dramatized with style and beauty, with standout script from Harold Pinter and bravura performances. A must-see on disc. Digital mono. (R) 123 min. LD $39.98. MGM/UA.

Girls on Top
1991. Tracey Ullman, Joan Greenwood; dir. Paul Jackson. Two episodes from the British series about oddball flatmates in London. Mono. 50 min. VHS only, $24.98. BFS.

Hollywood Mavericks
1990. Color/B&W. A *Who's Who* of filmdom's most innovative filmmakers—King Vidor, Samuel Fuller, Orson Welles, Sam Peckinpah, David Lynch, John Ford and more—and how they dealt with the studio system. Digital mono. 90 min. Side 2 CAV. LD $34.95. Lumivision.

continued on page 64

Compiled by April P. Bernard

Labels For Less

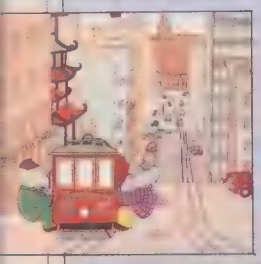
And the winner is...your wallet, when Academy Award fever drives prices down on Oscar's picks. From **MCA/Universal**, a mere $14.95 brings home *Airport, The Heiress, Written on the Wind* and the outstanding *Coal Miner's Daughter* and *Melvin & Howard*. And **MGM/UA** is taking $5 off four of its Best Actress titles: *I Want to Live!, Johnny Belinda, Min and Bill* and *The Miracle Worker*, all now $19.98.

MGM/UA is also promoting five new-to-video gangster titles—including James Cagney's classic *G-Men*—while reducing prices on four others, like *Angels With Dirty Faces* and *Public Enemy*. These "Cops and Robbers" can be had for $19.98. At **Columbia TriStar**, the good guys and bad guys are in five $14.95 westerns: *Silverado, Cat Ballou, Buck and the Preacher, The Desperados* and *Two Rode Together*.

Rita Hayworth is starring in another Columbia TriStar promotion, with 16 films spanning 20 years priced at $19.95. Two—*Down to Earth* and *Music in My Heart*—are new to video...*Kindergarten Cop* and *Darkman*, both from MCA/Universal, have just been marked down to $19.98...For the younger set: **f.h.e.** and **Vestron**'s favorite elephant, Babar, can be tracked down for $12.98 to $14.98, while Dennis the Menace, Charlie Brown, Raggedy Ann and Andy, Dot and the Littles are now available from **FoxVideo** for $14.98.

—APB

Babar the Elephant Comes to America



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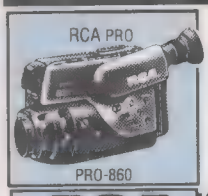
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PRO-860

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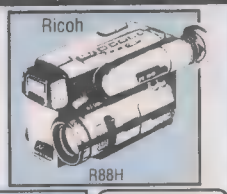
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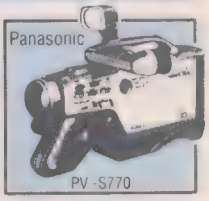
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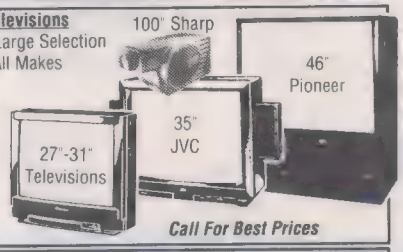

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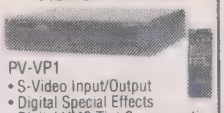

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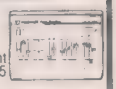

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continued from page 57

The Pope Must Diet
1991. Robbie Coltrane, Beverly D'Angelo; dir. Peter Richardson. It's so hard to find good help nowadays: Someone's been fudging figures in the Vatican's books, and a clerical error results in "Pope Dave" in this boisterous, controversial comedy. Originally released as *The Pope Must Die*. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 87 min. VHS, Beta $92.98. LD price n.a. Media.

Regarding Henry
1991. Harrison Ford, Annette Bening; dir. Mike Nichols. Popular drama—of fast-track lawyer whose cold demeanor changes after he survives a shooting—straddles line between heartwarming and nauseating. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG-13) 107 min. VHS, Beta priced for rental. LD (digital, letterboxed or pan-and-scan) $34.95. Paramount.

Twilight of the Cockroaches
1987. Hiroaki Yoshida's "director's cut" of Japanimation cult classic, filmed from the cockroaches' point of view and detailing their carefree lives in the apartment of a slovenly bachelor—until the new girlfriend arrives. Also features U.S. theatrical trailer. Digital stereo, letterboxed, subtitled. (NR) 105 min. LD $34.95. Lumivision.

Valley of the Dolls
1967. Patty Duke, Barbara Parkins, Sharon Tate; dir. Mark Robson. Deliciously sordid saga of three young women seduced by showbiz and drugs. Digital surround, letterboxed. (NR) 123 min. Side 3 CAV. LD $49.98. FoxVideo.

COMEDY

Cheap Shots
1991. Louis Zorich, David Patrick Kelly; dirs. Jeff Ureles, Jerry Stoeffhaas. With the Health Department on his back, a landlord attempts to finance repairs by making "peeping-tom" videotapes of his tenants. Stereo. (PG-13) 90 min. VHS $89.95. Sp. subtitled VHS $59.95. Hemdale.

Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead
1991. Christina Applegate, Joanna Cassidy, Keith Coogan; dir. Steven Herek. And her five young charges have run amok—and out of money. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (PG-13) 103 min. VHS, Sp.-subtitled VHS $94.99. 8mm price n.a. LD $29.98. HBO.

Mystery Date
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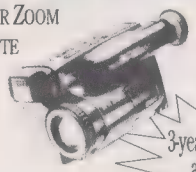

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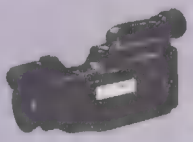

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DRAMA

Forever Mary
1989. Michele Placido, Alessandro Di Sanzo; dir. Marco Risi. Montreal Film Festival's Grand Prix du Jury winner: Teacher struggles to make changes at sadistic reform school. Stereo, subtitled. (NR) 100 min. VHS, Beta $79.95. Cinevista.

Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man
1991. Mickey Rourke, Don Johnson; dir. Simon Wincer. Someone should hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign on this dog. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 99 min. VHS, Beta, Sp.-subtitled VHS $94.99. 8mm $29.98. LD (digital) $24.98. MGM/UA.

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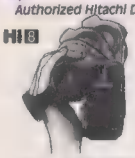

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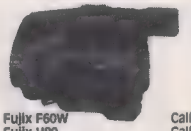

Fujix F60W		Call
Fujix H80		Call
Fujix P40U	Projector	Call

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R-861	Sports Finder	Call
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CVM-710	New	Call
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KTT-15	1.5x for Sony TRs	39.85
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Sound Mixer	Call
Title Maker	Call

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New for TR5	Call
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JVC JX-S300	Call
JVC JX-S900	Call
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Sony SB-V1	Call
Sony SB-V4B	Call

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JVC RM-V1000U	Call
Azden VE-100	Call
RCA Studio Pro	Call
Sima Sound Mixer	Call
Sony XV-D300	Call
Sony XV-T600	Call
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Sony RM-E300, 700	Call

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MICROPHONES

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Azden ECZ-770	Call
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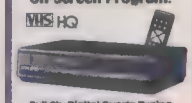

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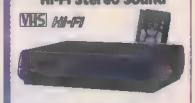

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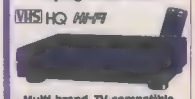

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The Great Ziegfeld
1936. B&W. William Powell, Luise Rainer, Myrna Loy, Fanny Brice; dir. Robert Z. Leonard. Best Picture of 1936: Lavish musical biography of Florenz Ziegfeld, with stunning performances by Powell and Oscar-winning Luise Rainer as the showman's first wife, Anna Held, and the dizzying spectacle of the revolving wedding cake for "A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody." Digital mono. (NR) 176 min. $39.98. MGM/UA.

Kitty Foyle
1940. B&W. Ginger Rogers, Dennis Morgan; dir. Sam Wood. Dalton Trumbo screenplay and tearjerking performance brought Ginger Rogers ■ Best Actress Oscar as a working-class heroine. Digital mono. (NR) 107 min. $29.95. RKO/Image.

The Love Bug
1969. Dean Jones, Michele Lee; dir. Robert Stevenson. 1969's biggest box-office hit introduced "Herbie," a very unusual Volkswagen. Digital mono. (G) 107 min. $34.99. Walt Disney.

The Sunshine Boys
1975. George Burns, Walter Matthau; dir. Herbert Ross. Neil Simon's Broadway play: Vaudeville old-timers reunite for ■ TV special. Digital stereo. (PG) 111 min. LD $34.98. MGM/UA.

SOURCES

BFS, 350 Newkirk Road, Richmond Hill, Ontario, L4C 3G7 Canada; 416-884-2323.
Collegiate Choice Walking Tours, 41 Surrey Lane, Tenafly, NJ 07670; 201-871-0098.
First Run Features, 153 Waverly Place, New York, NY 10014; 212-243-0600.
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CONTEST RULES

1. Contest entries must include contestant's name, address and telephone number. Mail entries to Video Contest, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001. Each entry must be submitted on a Scotch brand videocassette, and each entrant must be the original producer of the videocassette entered. Each entrant will receive a Scotch brand VHS videocassette. All entries must be postmarked by June 30, 1992, to be eligible. Not responsible for late, lost or misdirected mail. Limit one entry per category per household. By entering this contest, all entrants agree that all prizes are awarded upon the condition that 3M, *Video Magazine* and their respective agencies and employees will have no liability whatsoever for any injuries, losses or damage of any kind resulting from the acceptance, possession or use of the prize.

2. Winners will be selected by *Video Magazine*. Entries will be judged on the basis of creativity, graphics, technical merit, directorial and editing skills. By entering the contest, each entrant accepts and agrees to be bound by these rules and the decision of the judges, which shall be final.

3. All entries and the videocassettes become the property of 3M. Winners will be notified by mail and required to sign an affidavit of eligibility and release which must be completed and returned within fifteen (15) days of notification or the prize will be forfeited and awarded to an alternate winner. Winners grant permission for use of their names and/or photograph in conjunction with this and future promotions with no additional compensation.

4. PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE: One grand prize of up to $5,000, which must be used to purchase video or audio equipment (approximate retail value depends on equipment chosen).

FIRST PRIZES: Two prizes of up to $2,000, which must be used to purchase a camcorder and related equipment (approximate retail value depends on equipment chosen).

SPECIAL MERIT AWARDS: Five prizes of a Scotch Camcorder Care Kit (approximate retail value $30) and up to $100 toward the purchase of video software, blank or prerecorded (approximate retail value depends on software chosen).

5. Limit one prize per household. All prizes will be awarded. No transfer, substitutions or cash equivalents of prizes. All taxes on prizes are the responsibility of the winners. Grand prize and first prizes will be purchased ■ a retailer of winner's choice.

6. Contest open only to residents of the U.S. who are age 18 or older. Employees of 3M, *Video Magazine*, their immediate families, affiliates and agencies are not eligible to enter. Void where prohibited or restricted by law.

7. For a list of prize winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Contest Winners, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

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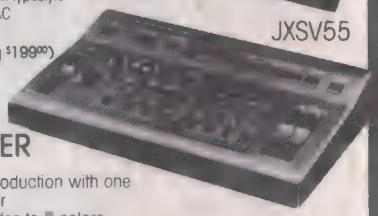

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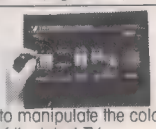

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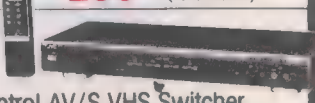

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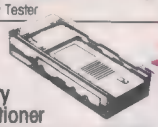

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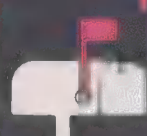

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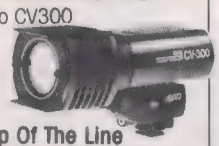

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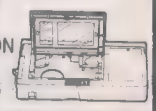

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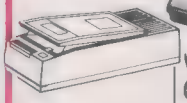

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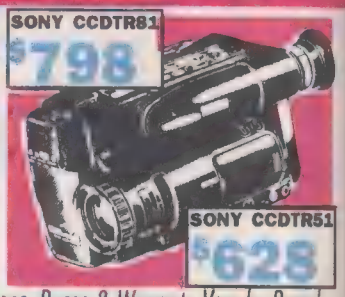

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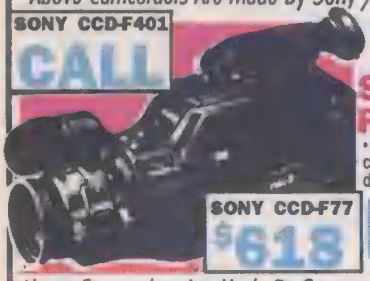

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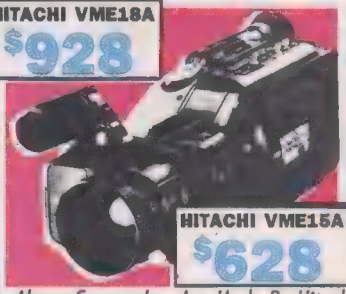

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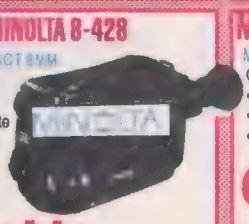

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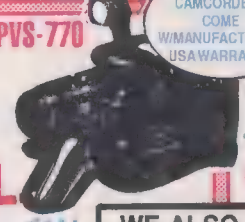

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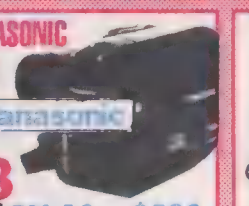

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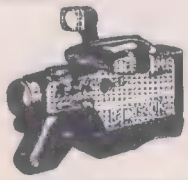

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1. What products do you currently own?

- VHS (VCR) Player A ☐
- Laserdisc Player/Combination Player B ☐
- 8MM Camcorder C ☐
- 8MM Deck D ☐

2. What products do you plan to buy in the next 12 months?

- VHS (VCR) Player E ☐
- Laserdisc Player/Combination Player F ☐
- 8MM Camcorder G ☐
- 8MM Deck H ☐

3. How many pre-recorded movies do you own? Please indicate by format.

	VHS	Laserdisc	8MM
0	I ☐	O ☐	U ☐
1-9	J ☐	P ☐	V ☐
10-25	K ☐	Q ☐	W ☐
26-49	L ☐	R ☐	X ☐
50-99	M ☐	S ☐	Y ☐
100+	N ☐	T ☐	Z ☐

4. Please indicate all formats in which you view or would like to view pre-recorded movies?

- VHS 1 ☐
- Laserdisc 2 ☐
- 8MM 3 ☐

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106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
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166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180
181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195

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Name _____ (please print)

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1. What products do you currently own?

- VHS (VCR) Player A ☐
- Laserdisc Player/Combination Player B ☐
- 8MM Camcorder C ☐
- 8MM Deck D ☐

2. What products do you plan to buy in the next 12 months?

- VHS (VCR) Player E ☐
- Laserdisc Player/Combination Player F ☐
- 8MM Camcorder G ☐
- 8MM Deck H ☐

3. How many pre-recorded movies do you own? Please indicate by format.

	VHS	Laserdisc	8MM
0	I ☐	O ☐	U ☐
1-9	J ☐	P ☐	V ☐
10-25	K ☐	Q ☐	W ☐
26-49	L ☐	R ☐	X ☐
50-99	M ☐	S ☐	Y ☐
100+	N ☐	T ☐	Z ☐

4. Please indicate all formats in which you view or would like to view pre-recorded movies?

- VHS 1 ☐
- Laserdisc 2 ☐
- 8MM 3 ☐

5. Are you currently a subscriber to VIDEO? 4 ☐ Yes 5 ☐ No

Please circle product numbers to receive desired information

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31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
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76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
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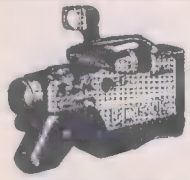

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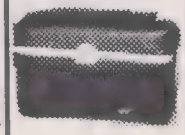

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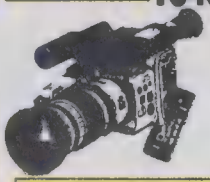

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ATTIC BIJOU

continued from page 46

tor unobtrusively mounted on the high ceiling. A Mitsubishi HS-U61 S-VHS VCR and a Pioneer CLD-91 laserdisc player handle primary program chores.

The custom speakers are manufactured by the Music Room (and only available through the Music Room), which configures them to suit the needs of each installation. The Bellevue theater employs five 120-watt units and three 200-watt subwoofers, all visible only as shadows within the fabric grille panels set into the walls.

The sound, of course, is Dolby Pro-Logic surround, while Pioneer Elite, Parasound and Audioease amplifiers provide the power. A Sony 10-disc CD player and a Pioneer audio cassette player round out the program options. ■

CEDIA

The Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association is a nationwide non-profit trade organization made up of companies that specialize in installing electronic entertainment, automation, security and communication systems in the home. CEDIA may be contacted by telephoning 1-800-CEDIA30 or by writing: CEDIA, 10400 Roberts Road, Palos Hills, IL 60465.

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DIAL V

continued from page 50

classes as well as stage full-motion video conferences. The teachers can call up programs from a special video library and initiate video conferences among different classrooms or even schools.

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CCD-SP9	899.00	CCD-V801	1199.00
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VCR's

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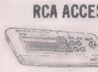

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VM-714	839.00	VH-6215	299.00
VM-715	899.00	VH-6415	339.00
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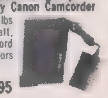

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CA-E7A Compact Power Adp.	99.95
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CG-690	529.00	CG-681	629.00
CG-683	569.00	CG-700	569.00
CG-695	589.00	CG-710	989.00
CG-697	819.00	Hard Case	39.95

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VG-7985	369.00	VG-4009	239.00
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VG-2003	199.00	VG-4018	259.00
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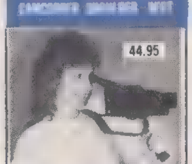
CVL-335	849.00	VR-9965	309.00
CVL-345	929.00	VR-9970	499.00
CVL-610	649.00	VR-9980	699.00



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Digital Paintbrush allows you to manipulate the colors in your videos to get the look of the latest TV commercials and music videos! **Features:** • 3 Channel Audio Mixer • Dual Outputs • Split Screen • Full Spectrum Color Processor • Digital Enhancer • SVHS Compatible.

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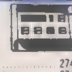
Processor Plus 174.95

AZDEN

VE-100



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VPC-10 Production Center	274.95
AVS-10 A/V Switcher	59.95
AVS-20 Switcher w/MIC Mixing	74.95
Audio Inout Cord f/VE-100	19.95

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EDL-1000 Software Program	269.00
EC-1000 TC Edit Control	1089.00
TCG-20 Time Code Generator	CALL

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Microvix-4X Objective Lens	CALL
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Editor/Pointer	CALL
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Lens Kit f/2-¼ Format	CALL
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LK-2250 Color Kit ■. 2	399.95
LK-2300 Cool Kit No. 3	399.95
LK-2100 Micro-Lux	39.95
LK-2150 Micro II	39.95
Cam Pack .... 69.95 Perfect Pack	99.95
LK-2350 Star Pak	599.95

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BC-3100 13 amp. BELT	199.95
BC-3200 20 amp BELT	229.95
BC-3500 Fast Charger	169.95
BC-3010 L 1.9 Batt	44.95
BC-3050 6.5 amp. PACK	59.95
BC-3060 2.3 amph.	49.95
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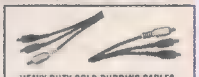

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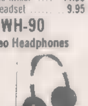

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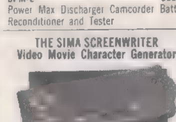

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CCD-F555	659.00	CCD-TR705	1399.00
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MS-IS-VHS	1179.00	S-100 VHS-C	789.00
M-8000 S-VHS	1189.	G2E VHS-C	799.00
G-100 VHS-C	649.00	NV-S1 VHS-C	749.00
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AIWA PAL

MG-300 .... **529.00**

JVC PAL

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SONY

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Even this brief summary of the services available to Cerritos customers shows that the homes with "wideband" fiber-optic cabling receive more advanced services than those with "narrowband" copper wire. This is because fiber-optic cable has far greater transmission capacity. Some fiber cables offer 30,000 times the capacity of traditional twisted-pair copper wire and twice the capacity of coaxial cable.

Each strand in a fiber-optic cable is made of ultrapure, ultratransparent glass about the diameter of a human hair. Usually made from silicon dioxide or fused quartz, the glass is cooled rapidly. This turns it into a solid without crystalizing, making it possible to create the long, thin fibrous form.

Signals travel through fiber cable in a beam of light shot from a laser. Fiber excels as a transport material because of its virtually unlimited channel capacity, fast transmission rate and resistance to electromagnetic disturbances.

Though fiber has many clear advantages, installation costs remain high. Fiber costs about $3,000 per household to install, which means it could cost as much as $250 billion to rewire the entire United States. But the question many are asking, including some FCC commissioners, is what about the 200 million miles of copper wire now in place in telephone installations throughout the country? Should we replace copper to create a new information network no one is sure consumers really want?

In Japan, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone, the world's largest telecommunications company, is already converting the entire nation to fiber. By the year 2015, Nippon plans to link fiber-optic cable to all of the country's 45 million homes at a cost of $60 billion. But Masashi Kojima, president of Nippon Telephone, recently expressed doubt about his company's massive project. "Perhaps this is inappropriate for the head of a telecommunications company to say, but I shall go ahead anyway," Kojima told *The New York Times*. "I wonder if this flood of information really makes our life richer."

A NEW TWIST

While the debate over fiber optics continues, a new break in telephone technology may allow existing twisted-pair copper wire to deliver video, voice and data. Bellcore, the research and technical support arm of the Bay Bell companies, recently announced a new technology called asymmetrical digital subscriber line (ADSL), which can expand the transmission capacity of copper-based phone networks. ADSL,

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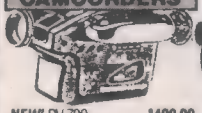

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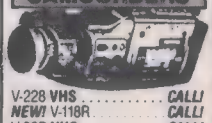

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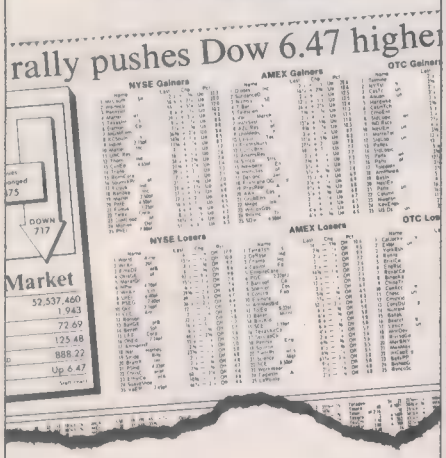

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which uses digital signal processing, can provide enough capacity for customers to receive VCR-quality video along with a regular telephone call.

"ADSL provides a viable interim technology that can link fiber and copper telecommunications facilities and deliver a precursor of information age services," says Bellcore executive Paul Shumate. "ADSL is not meant, however, to take the place of future fiber-optic networks. With their virtually unlimited bandwidth, fiber-optic networks will provide for services, such as multimedia communications and high-definition television, that copper-based networks simply cannot handle."

The rapid development of transmission technology concerns some FCC members, even though they voted to permit local phone companies to provide video dial tone service. FCC Commissioner Ervin S. Duggan supports the concept but worries that it is too early to define "how video gateways ought to be designed and provided.

"For regulators to promote a particular network design is at best unnecessary," Duggan explains. "At worst, it smacks of industrial policy, or of policymaking by the method of Procrustes' bed, in which he hacked off the inconvenient limbs of guests who did not fit the bed." FCC Commissioner Sherrie P. Marshall echoed this opinion, noting that government endorsement of a fiber-optic system would be the worst kind of policy. "Advanced video compression techniques may offer a cheaper short-term alternative to fiber for many video and information services," she explains, adding that "advances in wireless communications could, in the long term, offer a more cost-effective alternative."

Could the video dial tone turn into a hit-driven TV system that caters to a broad, but undemanding audience? Program diversity is another major concern of both the FCC and a spectrum of public advocacy groups like National Video Resources, a New York-based organization dedicated to high-quality, independent video and film.

"Several hundred program choices sound rich in possibility, but who will have access to this fiber-optic highway?" asks Gretchen Dykstra, project director for National Video Resources. "And once on the highway, how will any program find an audience among all the competition? Only well-financed, commercial entities will be able to afford the promotion to stand out in the crowd.

"As society prepares to take a quantum leap into new communication terrain, a strong voice for a diversity of perspectives needs to be raised," continues Dykstra. "The multibillion-dollar telephone and cable companies battling for control of our rec rooms should be expected to support non-commercial programming. If this focus is lost, the infinite choices we will all soon have may, ironically, offer no choices at all." ■

FORMULA 1

continued from page 41

keeping the CRTs properly aligned so they overlap precisely at the screen. This process is called convergence. In the case of Vidikron's projectors, a flexible setup routine allows for fine control of corner and center convergence adjustments. New Harman models feature a semiautomated convergence routine that can be run from the remote control.

High-end projection units represent the pinnacle of the designer's art. In addition to unimpeachable brightness and photographic-quality optics, several models offer either integral or add-on line doubling. This innovative technique effectively doubles the resolution of a standard video source, resulting in a picture that begins to approach high-definition television.

A standard NTSC video signal comprises 525 lines of vertical resolution, divided into two fields of 262.5 lines scanned every sixtieth of a second. In a conventional monitor, the 262.5 odd-numbered lines are scanned first, followed by the remaining even-numbered ones. Together, they account for a full frame of video. A line doubler memorizes one set of lines, and displays it simultaneously with the other set. This results in an improved-definition television (IDTV) picture that keeps all the lines on the screen at all times for an extremely noticeable improvement.

While early IDTV technologies exhibited digital artifacts, like flickering motion and occasional color glitches, these bugs have been largely conquered. Some models, like the Runco IDTV, offer a built-in line doubler. Other companies, like Ikegami and Micro Data, offer outboard doublers that can be used in conjunction with a good data-grade projection system. If your budget can withstand the shock, an IDTV-based projection system is state-of-the-art video, *circa* 1992.

Putting together a projection-based media room is certainly more complicated than plopping a TV set in the corner, but the rewards are undeniable. You are, for all intents and purposes, putting a movie theater in your home. With a bit of planning, some routine upkeep and, of course, a well-primed checkbook, you really can create a household cineplex. And isn't that what the home entertainment revolution is all about? ■

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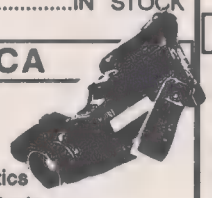

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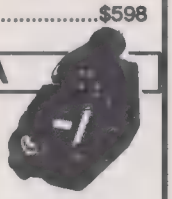

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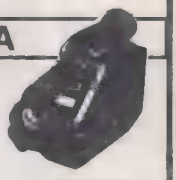

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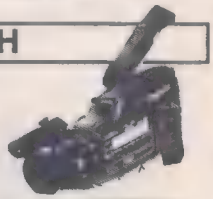

108-H
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10x Zoom
Remote
Ricoh Optics

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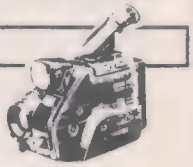
R-830.....ALL
R-831.....MODELS
R-860.....IN
R-861.....STOCK

JVC



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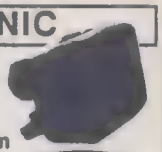

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VHS CAMCORDER

continued from page 15

(from the built-in mic, an external mic or line input) and insert edit make it possible to modify a recording for creative editing without generation loss.

With an optional dubbing cord, the V-228 can execute synchronized edits with certain VCRs, although the manual does not specify which. However, our experience suggests that recent synchro edit-equipped Minolta VHS camcorders work well with synchro edit-equipped Hitachi and RCA VCRs.

The V-228 uses a unique transport design to achieve its short, eight-inch height. The video head drum is in the grip area, forward of the tape hatch, which requires a special threading mechanism. Otherwise, its design is fairly traditional.

The electronic viewfinder is mounted on top of the camera section. It swings forward for transport and slides leftward for left-eye viewing. The viewing hood swings 45 degrees downward for high-angle shooting, and 90 degrees upward for low-angle shooting. There is a convenient fixed carrying handle. Most of the controls occupy the usual positions, except for the mic mixing switch on the bottom. A compartment on the top rear conceals the earphone jack and a rectangular, multipin audio/video output connector. A round, multipin A/V input connector sits next to the mic mixing switch on the bottom.

The lens has levers for manual focus and zoom, which have become rarities—most subcompact camcorders offer only power zoom and power manual focus buttons. There is no auto macro, so you have to push a button at the tip of the zoom lever to enter the macro range. Another button, on the underside of the lens cowl, activates one-shot autofocusing in manual focus mode. This makes it easy to achieve a rough focus quickly, then fine-tune it manually. The lens hood may be unscrewed for mounting auxiliary lenses and filters.

There are two digital zoom modes. One digitally doubles the lens' reach for 16x maximum effective zoom. The other magnifies up to 8x, for 64x maximum zoom. A zoom mode button accesses these modes, and also activates wide and slim shooting modes. Although the manual says almost nothing about these modes, Hitachi, which markets a similar model, says the wide mode is intended for use with widescreen VCRs and TV sets. Until such equipment is available, the wide and slim modes can be used with standard monitors to stretch or squeeze a picture for special effects.

The camcorder features a knob-type manual iris, for more precise exposure adjustment than that provided by plus and minus buttons. The negative/positive switch lets you transfer color negatives directly to video and also lets you

Minolta V-228 VHS Camcorder

Price: $1,300

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 5.1 lbs. without battery and cassette; 7-7/8 x 5-1/2 x 15-3/8 inches

Image Sensor: 1/3-inch CCD, 270,000 pixels

Lens: f/1.4; 8x (6.2-50mm) optical power/manual zoom with 8x digital magnification and manual macro range

Filter Diameter: 46mm

Minimum Focusing Distance: 2 feet, exclusive of macro

Autofocus: active IR switchable to manual

Minimum Illumination: 6.7 lux for 50 IRE measured

Iris: auto/manual

Auto Fade: hold-down type

Shutter Speeds (sec.): 1/60 (normal), 1/120, 1/250, 1/1,000, 1/2,000, 1/10,000

White Balance: continuous AI auto

Viewfinder: electronic with diopter, onscreen indicators for auto exposure-shutter speed/full auto, battery condition, zoom mode, blank search, low light, index, interval/self timer, title, operating mode, counter/memory/time remaining, date and time

Viewfinder Controls: diopter focus, brightness, electrical focus

VCR Controls: eject, rewind/search, play, fast forward/search, stop, still, audio dub, video dub and tracking

Microphone: mono electret condenser with wind noise filter

Jacks: earphone, A/V input and output, external mic, contact for dedicated video light

Tape Format & Speed: VHS SP

Video Heads: 2

Cue & Review Search: 3x

Fast Forward/Rewind Time: 10 min. for T-160

Remote Pause: through remote switch or optional video/audio dubbing cable

Counter Digits & Memory: 5—hrs:mins:secs./time remaining

Program Start Locator/Index/Cue: VISS index mark and read

Audio: linear mono

Titles: 2 pages, each 1 line of 16 characters

Special Features: still frame, audio dub, video dub, insert edit, interval/self timer, flying erase head, full-size head drum, programmed auto exposure, synchro edit, mic mixing, negative/positive recording, blank search

Absent Features: hi-fi stereo audio, digital superimposer, standard connectors for video/audio/remote, remote control

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: 240 lines

S/N Ratios (dB): unweighted video—45.8, weighted video—52.6, chroma AM—47.1, chroma PM—43.4

Audio Frequency Response: 100 Hz-10 kHz, +2.4/-3 dB

Linear Audio S/N: 43.1 dB

Audio Distortion: 1.2%

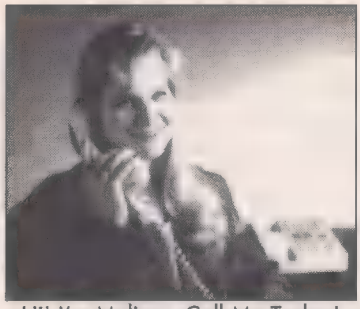
RATINGS

Picture: excellent

Audio: very good

Ease of Use: very good

Overall: very good/excellent



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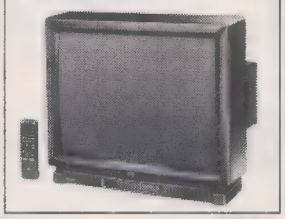

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Full function remote

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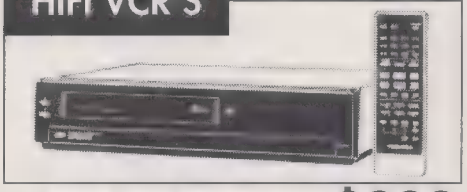

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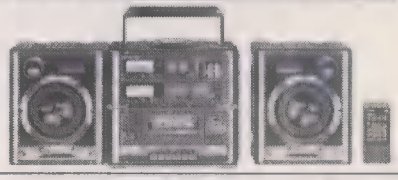

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create an interesting effect with live recordings. With only two pages of one-line titles, the V-228's titling capability is rather minimal.

There are no menus, and most functions have dedicated buttons, making ease of use very good. Despite its size, it feels comfortable. The one real annoyance is that it uses non-standard connectors and cables for A/V input and output. If one should malfunction while you're on vacation, you'll have to hunt down a Minolta dealer, unless you get spares and carry them with you.

Picture quality is excellent for VHS. The camera section is rated at 2 lux sensitivity, but delivers only 30 IRE units at that illumination level. To reach our standard of 50 IRE output, it requires 6.7 lux of light. The digital zoom enlarges the picture without adding detail, so as the zoom range increases, pixels become larger and resolution drops. Audio quality is very good for VHS linear-track mono. Overall, we rate the V-228 very good to excellent. It's nice to see that Minolta is giving consumers who prefer large camcorders an up-to-date, feature-packed option. ■

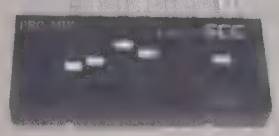
MORE MODELS

continued from page 41

that makes upkeep simple. Barco also offers an extensive line of projectors, from the $7,995 Barcovision 600S, a multi-standard unit which takes video, S-video and RGB signals, to the Barcovision 1500 HDTV, a $16,995 projector with an optical resolution of 2,200 horizontal lines. It can be set for 4:3 or 16:9 aspect ratios.

High-end projection video is not for the faint of heart, either esthetically or economically. Runco's $14,990 Super IDTV features very effective line doubling and a unique optional aspect ratio controller. This device lets a user switch between letterbox, Cinemascope, HDTV and standard television aspect ratios by pushing a button. Vidikron's $12,000 Pininfarina VPF-40 is also HDTV ready, and the hardware is as

PRO-MIX



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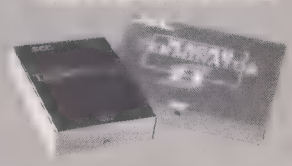

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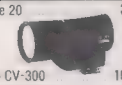

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beautiful as the picture quality, thanks to some very lush Italian styling.

Broadcast equipment veteran Ikegami offers the TPP-1500 ($87,000), a professional unit that provides an astounding 1,100 lumens of peak illumination through its nine-inch CRTs. As an add-on, you can get the company's $12,750 DSC-1050S, a digital scan converter which will perform line doubling and other picture enhancements. Hey, nobody said this stuff was cheap!

—RG

TECH TIP

Swab swap

If your VCR's heads desperately need cleaning, but you're out of head cleaning swabs and there's no electronics store nearby, don't substitute a conventional cotton-tipped swab. Your corner drugstore offers a better solution—sponge-tipped makeup applicators. These are much better than Q-Tips because they can't shed hairs while you're cleaning.

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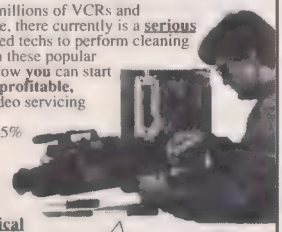

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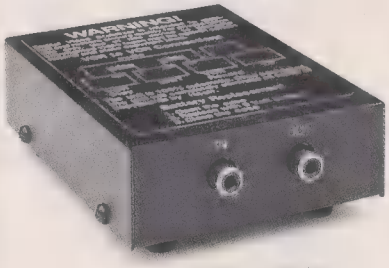

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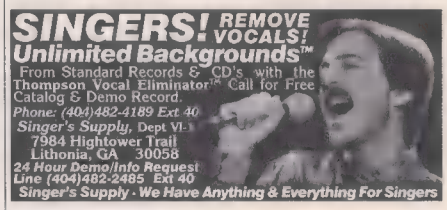

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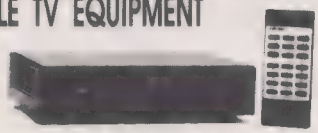

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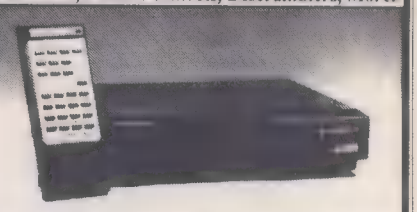

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JVC S-VHS Edit System Includes: 1 BRS-611U, 1 BRS-811U, 1 RMG-810U

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JVC 3 Chip Camera with Docking S-VHS VTR Includes: KY17FITU 3 chip camera, BRS411U S-VHS docking VTR, optional accessory battery, A/C adaptor, battery charger, carrying case.

Sony 3 Chip Camera / HI-8 Docking VTR Includes: BXC325 3 chip camera & EVV-9000 HI-8 Docking VTR, optional accessory - battery, A/C adaptor, battery charger.

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PV-41	PV-760

Nikon

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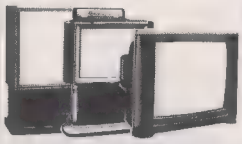
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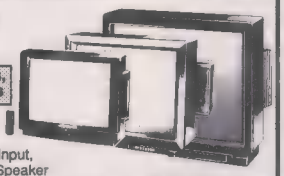
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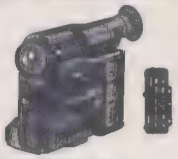
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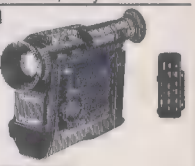
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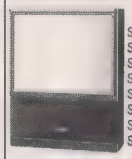
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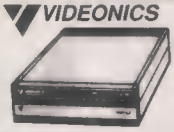
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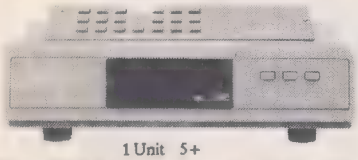

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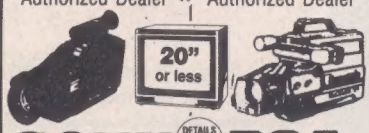

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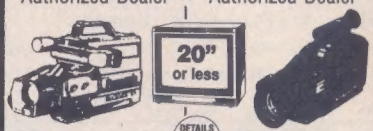

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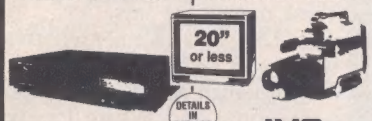

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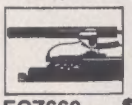

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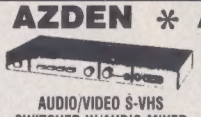

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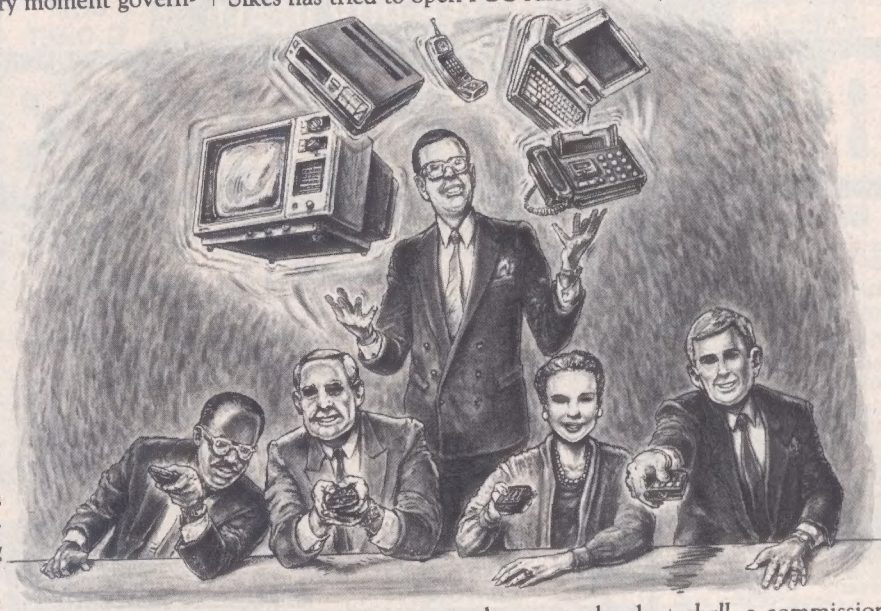
OFF THE AIR

Who's who—and for what—in the FCC

BY FRANK BEACHAM

America is facing a sea change in video technology. Recent breakthroughs in digital technology are about to make the longtime dreams of videophiles come true. The possibilities are so rich that a thoughtful examination of our video future is in order. The possibility of 500 interactive communication channels entering the average home will profoundly affect our daily lives.

In fact, at this very moment government leaders are making the decisions that will define video, audio and data delivery systems for the 21st century. Who are they? Who is deciding our video future? Although the president and Congress have some role in these major decisions, the five members of the Federal Communications Commission are the key players in determining tomorrow's video delivery systems. In the coming months, FCC commissioners will make important decisions about the video dial tone (see "Dial V for Video"), HDTV, cable TV, satellite delivery systems, digital radio broadcasting, pocket-sized telephones and radio-based personal computers. The agenda is awesome in scale and complexity.



The FCC invites public comment on these issues. Usually it's the special-interest groups and lobbyists who respond. But FCC members want to hear from intelligent consumers about these issues. FCC staffers say all letters are read and have a real influence on the thinking of the decision makers.

But who is the FCC? The five commissioners are not exactly household names. They are not even "experts" on communications, necessarily. Each was lucky enough to be appointed by the president for a four-year term and confirmed by the Senate. Most would like to know what you, as a videophile, think. Here are FCC's five current members:

• *Alfred C. Sikes* is the chairman, a video buff and a strong proponent of emerging digital technology. A Missouri native with a background in radio broadcasting, law and state government, Sikes has tried to open FCC rules to foster competition among the new technologies. He wants to put American companies on equal footing with those in Japan and Europe. Sikes is a futurist who sees a world of satellite and fiber optic-delivered, interactive, digital HDTV with multimedia computer capability.

• *James H. Quello* is a former Detroit broadcast executive from station WJR. The longest serving FCC member, he was reappointed to a new term last year. He's still undecided about letting phone companies participate in video programming and about joint ventures between telephone companies and cable TV systems. "I will be very interested in reviewing the (public) comments which address these topics," he says.

• *Ervin S. Duggan* is a former reporter for *The Washington Post* and national editor of *Washingtonian Magazine*, as well as a congressional and White House aide. Duggan also wrote, with Ben J. Wattenberg, *Against All Enemies*, a political novel based on his White House days. Appointed to the FCC in 1990, Duggan feels some new technologies hold great promise but describes himself as "a friendly skeptic" in judging them. "The brave new video world will evolve, I'm sure, in ways that surpass our wildest imaginings," he predicts.

• *Andrew C. Barrett*, a Chicago native, also joined the FCC in 1990. He is a lawyer with a background in government regulation. A supporter of the video dial tone, Barrett is worried that phone companies could discriminate against program providers and is looking for ways to safeguard diversity over phone company video lines.

• *Sherrie Marshall*, a commissioner since 1989, was a member of President Bush's White House transition team. On the issue of video delivery systems, she has warned against establishing a policy to wire the nation with fiber-optic cable. "It's not yet clear the public actually wants to pay for any of the new multimedia gadgets now being touted as the network of the future," she says.

The FCC wants to hear from educated consumers about the issues affecting our video future. Write to the individual commissioners or to the Office of the Secretary, FCC, Washington, D.C. 20554. They may not agree with you, but they are ready to listen. ■

JAMES GARCIA

WIRELESS SPEAKERS

Breakthrough speaker technology sends music wirelessly throughout your home!

TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGH

Music lover's dream! If you're a music lover you've probably considered running a maze of speaker wires all over your house or dragging your speakers from room to room so you could listen to your stereo in your living room, den, bedroom or patio. Frustrated?

In 1991, an electronics company called **Datawave** introduced their line of wireless speakers at the ***Consumer Electronics Show***, turning the heads of some of the largest manufacturers in the world. ***These wireless speakers have been touted as "one of the most exciting new products of the 90's."***

Imagine listening to music anywhere in your home or outdoors without miles of speaker wire. You could listen to any component of your stereo system (CDs, records, tapes, AM/FM stereo,... etc.) throughout your home. Like the speakers of your dreams, they have their own built-in amplifier, so you can switch them on and off and control the volume independently at each speaker. These self-amplified speakers cannot be blown out, regardless of your stereo's wattage.

> "Our TV and stereo are in the same room and my husband and kids were always fighting before we got the Datawave speakers. Thanks for bringing peace to our family!"
> *D. Lance, Madison, WI*

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The heart of Datawave's breakthrough design is a patented FM technology which broadcasts music wirelessly from a small transmitter to satellite speakers. ***The transmitter, about the size of a paperback book, sends the music through walls, floors, and ceilings to the speakers*** and simply plugs into a headphone, audio-out or tape-out jack on your stereo, VCR or TV.

WS7 SPEAKER

Now for the big question– How do they sound? These speakers sound great, with deep, rich bass and crystal clear highs. You see, these speakers operate on two selectable frequencies, insuring static-free transmission throughout your home. The speakers are self-powered, with a 150 ft. range through walls, providing total coverage in even the largest homes. These wireless speakers will belt out as much volume as you'll ever need to fill your rooms with music. They even have an amazing built-in detection circuit which automatically cuts them off when you turn off your stereo.

MUSIC ANYWHERE

You can operate as many speakers as you like on one transmitter. In addition, you can utilize one transmitter to mix both left and right channels on each speaker or use two transmitters with as many pairs of speakers as you want to get full stereo separation. So place one speaker or more in a room or one speaker in every room of the house–the possibilities are limitless!

All of these wireless speakers are compatible, using the same transmitter, so you can mix and match them to fill your home with music. So listen to your stereo where you want, and take advantage of the following assortment of innovative wireless speakers.

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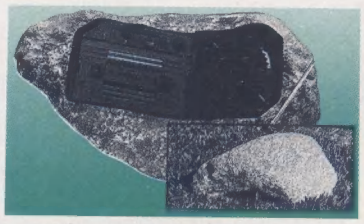
- **WSH-7**, our wireless **shower speaker**. Listen to news or sports programs while in the shower or sing along to your favorite music. This speaker is hung directly from the shower head and is fully waterproof.

- **WRS10**, a wireless speaker mounted in a rock-like enclosure. The **rock speaker** is an ultra-realistic reinforced fiberglass boulder that contains a state of the art FM receiver and weatherproof speaker. The downward firing speaker and acoustic enclosure are designed to resonate and enhance the bass. Designed for patio, garden, and pool areas, it blends in completely with your surroundings.



> "I'm not a gadget guy, but these speakers amazed me. They're not only wireless, but sound great too!" *M. Thompson, San Diego, CA*

- **WH200**, a **wireless headphone** that allows you to enjoy private TV sound or music anywhere in or around your home.

> "I have a great sound system in my family room, but I'm not always in that room. Now I can listen to my favorite CDs anywhere in my home even on the patio." *J. Randal, Reading, PA*

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